An exploration of gendered discourse in the talk of female facilitators of a wilderness programme

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Declaration

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on discourses in the talk of female facilitators of a wilderness programme. The specific interest is whether and how beliefs and assumptions regarding gender permeate their conceptions of wilderness. This study explored how gender may influence the ways in which wilderness excursions are implemented, and sought to identify discourses that may reinforce male stereotyping of the realm of wilderness. It also aimed at assessing if and how wilderness experiences challenge or perpetuate gender stereotypes.

The research design comprised an ethnographic approach and took the form of a case study. The particular group - or case - being studied was the female wilderness facilitators at Usiko, a non-governmental organisation in the Western Cape that offers programmes for youth-at-risk. Wilderness excursions form a crucial component of these programmes, which draw on the natural environment as a means of promoting healing and personal growth. The epistemological base on which the study rests is social constructionist feminism. There was thus a specific focus on the ways in which participants used language to construct meaning in relation to their lives.

Data was gathered through six individual interviews and a focus group discussion. It was then analysed and interpreted using a discourse analytic approach. Findings indicated that participants have ambivalent views on gender and gender roles, and associate it with both disadvantages and benefits. This ambivalence was reflected in the ways in which participants both resisted – and seemed to perpetuate a discourse of male privilege. Beliefs and assumptions about gender were furthermore reflected in the implementation and facilitation of wilderness camps, and in the ways in which women conceptualise wilderness. One the one hand, wilderness was constructed as a place where pressure to conform to gender roles is significantly less than in an everyday urban environment. This view of wilderness opens up opportunities for utilising wilderness as a place where gender stereotyping might be challenged. However, a second view of wilderness constructed it as a masculine domain. This view was influenced by the assumption that masculine characteristics, such as autonomy, leadership, risk-taking and physical strength, are needed to participate in outdoor-based activities. In this view, wilderness becomes a place where gender stereotypes are perpetuated. This also reflected in the ways in which separate camps for adolescent boys and girls are structured. This view of wilderness, as well as the accompanying practices on wilderness camps which reinforce this view, could close down possibilities for utilising wilderness experiences as a means of challenging gender stereotyping.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie is gerig op diskoerse in die taalgebruik van vroulike fasiliteerders van ‘n wildernis program. Daar word spesifiek gekyk na of - en hoe oortuigings en aannames betreffende geslag, opvattings oor wildernis deurdring. Hierdie studie het die maniere waarop geslag die uitvoer van wildernis uitstappies mag beïnvloed ondersoek, en het beoog om diskoerse wat die stereotipering van wildernis as ’n manlike gebied versterk, te identifiseer. Dit het ook beoog om vas te stel of – en hoe wildernis ervaringe geslagstereotipes uitdaag of voortsit.

Die navorsingsontwerp behels ‘n etnografiese benadering en maak gebruik van ’n gevallestudie. Die spesifieke geval wat bestudeer is, is die vroulike wildernis fasiliteerders by Usiko, ’n organisasie in die Wes-Kaap wat programme vir hoe-risiko jeugdiges bied. Wildernis uitstappies vorm ’n kritieke deel van hierdie programme wat gebruik maak van die natuurlike omgewing as ’n manier om genesing en persoonlike ontwikkeling aan te moedig. Die epistemologiese basis van hierdie studie behels ’n feministiese, diskoers analitiese benadering. Daar was dus ’n spesifieke fokus op die maniere waarop deelnemers taal gebruik het om betekenis in verband met hul lewenservaringe te konstrueer.

Data is ingesamel deur ses individuele onderhoude en ‘n fokus groep bespreking. Daarna is dit analiseer en interpreteer deur middel van diskoers analise. Die bevindinge dui daarop dat deelnemers ambivalente oortuigings betreffende geslag en geslagsrolle koester. Dit bevat vir hulle beide voordele en nadele. Hierdie ambivalensie kon opgetel word in die maniere waarop deelnemers ’n diskoers van manlike voorreg beide ondersteun en uitgedaag het. Oortuiginge en aannames betreffende geslag is ook weerspiëel in die ontwerp en fasilitering van wildernis kampe, en in die maniere waarop die vroue wildernis konseptualiseer.

Aan die een kant is wildernis gekonstrueer as ’n plek waar daar aansienlik minder druk is om in te val by geslagsrolle, as wat daar in ’n alledaagse, stedelike omgewing is. Hierdie indruk van wildernis skep die geleentheid om die wildernis te benut as ’n plek waar geslagstereotipering uitgedaag kan word. ’n Tweede opvatting van wildernis konstrueer dit egter as ‘n manlike gebied. Hierdie opvatting word beïnvloed deur die aanname dat tipies manlike eienskappe, soos die van onafhanklikheid, leierskap, risiko-onderneming en fisiese krag, benodig word om deel te neem aan buitelug aktiwiteite. Met hierdie opvatting word die wildernis ’n plek waar geslagstereotipes versterk word. Hierdie opvatting word verder weerspieël in die maniere waarin aparte kampe vir meisies en seuns ontwerp is. Hierdie idee van wildernis, sowel as die bykomende gebruike wat dit versterk, beperk die moontlikhede wat die wildernis kan bied om geslagstereotipes uit te daag.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Gendered assumptions and expectations form a significant part in the construction and implementation of outdoor activities. This is largely due to the physical component inherent in participation in outdoor activities. Despite the fact that women reap various benefits from participating in outdoor activities, the realm of wilderness and outdoor activities seem to remain strongly embedded in a masculine culture. At the same time, past research shows that participation in wilderness-based activities can facilitate a deconstruction of gender and gender stereotyping, in turn benefiting women. In an exploration of the gendered nature of outdoor activities, this study draws on research from two relatively distinct fields, namely gender studies – specifically recent feminist theory – and ecopsychology. It focuses specifically on the ways in which beliefs about gender influence the ways in which female facilitators of a wilderness programme view "wilderness".

1.2 Background

Feminism is often mistaken for a purely academic pursuit, in which issues of gender and women's oppression are debated (Shefer, Boonzaier, & Kiguwa, 2006). It is indeed true that the study of cultural gender constructions and relations - and how these can be manipulated as tools of oppression (particularly where men are "able to occupy positions of social power over women") are central feminist concerns (Kiguwa, 2004, p. 279). However, feminist practice is also specifically active in its commitment to social change. Over the years, different schools of feminist thought have developed and nowadays, it is generally accepted that common political, economic and social goals are not shared by all women alike. Depending on one's cultural background, personal experiences and theoretical orientation, "it is possible to have a range of different commitments and agendas that would deem necessary to remedy women's unequal status in society" (Kiguwa, 2004, p. 279). However, patriarchal societies around the world remain, and however varying the circumstances for individual women might be, in general women still experience a seemingly endless list of social inequalities and injustices (Pohl, Borrie, & Patterson, 2000).

Radical movements during the 1960's and 1970's opened up debates regarding a whole range of issues regarding sex and gender. These issues included sexual expression, economic inequality, police violence against gays, as well as rape (Connell, 1987). Feminist and gay liberation movements not only addressed these issues, but also prompted the development of a new theoretical vocabulary, which included terms such as "sexual politics", "patriarchy" and "oppression" (Connell, 1987). Sexual politics brought to the

foreground certain patterns of interest, conflict and power, which demanded a review of our understanding of the nature of social reality. This has been and still is an ongoing process.

Discussions about gender are often afflicted by an assumption that "what is biological or 'natural' is somehow more real than what is social" (Connell, 1987, p. x). A social constructionist perspective, however, proposes the opposite. Instead of using physiology as a means of legitimating the categories of male and female (some societies also make use of a third gender), emphasis is placed on human agency - on the ways in which gendered identities are constructed through social experiences and practices (Lorber, 2000). In a similar vein, Goldner (2003) suggests that in recent years, the work of contemporary feminists, gay and lesbian scholars, queer theorists and others, "has made it impossible to take any form of gender or sexuality as a given" (p. 114). She asserts, "the postmodern traditions in both feminist theory and psychoanalysis conceive of gender and sexuality as emerging in and through history and culture and thus consider them to be fluid and variable social categories" (Goldner, 2003, p. 114).

Gender has become so pervasive in everyday life that its assumptions - for example, that male and female differences are innate - are taken for granted (Lorber, 2000). As a powerful social construction, gender is one of the main ways in which humans categorise and organise their lives (Lorber, 2000). It "divides work in the home and in economic production, legitimates those in authority, and organizes sexuality and emotional life" (Lorber, 2000, p. 52). However, gender categories are constructed to be unequal and disadvantages women. Throughout history and across cultures, gender categories are often deemed mutually exclusive; each one being defined by what the other is not (Dimen & Goldner, 2005). Masculinity is typically aligned with activity, reason and mastery, while femininity is associated with passivity, intuition and nurturance (Lugg, 2003; Whittington, 2006). In patriarchal societies, gender creates a power hierarchy of men over women, assigning superior status to masculine characteristics (Lugg, 2003). Thus constructions of masculinity and femininity strongly influence – and perpetuate gender inequality and oppression. As a further result, during their development from girls into women, adolescent girls are under pressure to appear – and behave in certain ways, which often have a negative impact on how they perceive themselves. The negative effects of gender categories carry over into the realm of outdoor activities, due to a perception that typically masculine characteristics are needed to participate in outdoor activities, for example, autonomy, leadership, assertiveness and physical strength (Delay & Dyment, 2003). However, time spent in the wilderness also seems to offer ways of challenging and overcoming gender stereotypes.

Much of the literature on ecopsychology proposes that we experience ourselves differently when spending much time in nature, than we do in urban settings and in regular day-to-day life (Beringer, 2004;

Roszak, Gomes, & Kanner, 1995; Russel & Phillips-Miller, 2002). In the wilderness, human norms, values and intentions – of which gender expectations and stereotypes form a significant part – seem to have less influence on the perceptions we have of ourselves. Greenway (1995), notes that the wilderness experience could have a profound effect on the psyche, "if conducted as a retreat from cultural dominance" (p. 123). He states that for many people, "the wilderness experience means release of repression – release of the inevitable controls that exist in any culture" (Greenway, 1995, p. 128).

Constructed gender identities which perpetuate the oppression of women could also be described as "controls" that exist in society, regulating behaviour and organising sexuality and emotional lives. Even in societies in which feminist pursuits have had considerable influence, boys are still encouraged to dominate and lead, whereas girls are still expected to take on the role of receptive caregiver (Gomes & Kanner, 1995). However, wilderness experiences could serve as a release from these "controls" - from the societal norms and expectations which shape gender identities (Greenway, 1995). In a similar vein, Harper (1995) notes that time spent in the wilderness often "evokes the unacknowledged feminine or masculine side of a woman or a man" (p. 191). In this way, wilderness experiences could offer an avenue for both men and women to develop different perceptions about themselves.

1.3 Social constructionist feminism

As a strand of postmodern theory, social constructionism (SC) contests the idea of an objective, knowable reality and instead, proposes that multiple interpretations of reality are legitimate (White, 2004). As such, human interactions stem from the social and cultural contexts in which people operate (Gonzales, Biever, & Gardner, 1994). A modernist (or 'liberal humanist') take on language sees it as a transparent means of describing an objective reality (Gergen & Davis, 1999). SC, however, emphasises the role of language in the constitution of reality.

In the past three decades, feminists working in various areas relevant to psychology have increasingly adopted postmodern positions, especially SC (Gergen, 2001). A social constructionist, feminist perspective defines gender as a socially constructed notion of identity. In this study, a social constructionist, feminist perspective has been adopted as a means of exploring how gender might influence constructions of wilderness and wilderness-based activities. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

1.4 Problem Statement

Evidence of the negative effects of the social construction of gender pervades the realm of outdoor experiences. For example, the wilderness, particularly with regard to skills or characteristics needed to

participate in outdoor activities, is frequently portrayed as a masculine domain (Humberstone, 1990; Whittington, 2006). As Whittington (2006) notes, "'Traditional' feminine behaviour exists in contrast to masculine traits (e.g. autonomy, power, competitiveness, strength, determination and authoritarianism), which are socially valued qualities, and perceived by the dominant culture as essential for success in outdoor activities" (Whittington, 2006, p. 1).

However, various studies have shown that women reap benefits from participating in outdoor activities (Henderson, 1994, 1996; Henderson & Grant, 1998; Whittington, 2006). These include positive mental, physical and spiritual outcomes. It has also been shown that time spent in nature can aid a deconstruction of gender and gender stereotyping, in turn promoting the development of a more positive and integrated gender identity in both men and women (Harper, 1995; Pohl, Borrie et al., 2000; Whittington, 2006). Nevertheless, gender stereotyping still often plays a role in the implementation of wilderness-based programmes.

Usiko is an organisation that offers programmes designed to support and guide youth-at-risk during their transition into adulthood[1]. Evidence of gender stereotyping was evident in the initial design of Usiko's school-based diversion programme, particularly in the wilderness-based intervention that forms an important part of it. A programme for adolescent girls specifically was developed some years after the implementation of a programme for young boys and both the girls' - and boys' programmes included a wilderness excursion. Initially, however, the wilderness excursion for the girls' programme was designed to be more "toned-down" than the one for the boys - in other words, safer and perhaps less challenging (A. Naidoo, personal communication, December 16, 2008). For example, where the boys went into the mountains, the girls went to the beach, which served as a more familiar and less isolated environment. Interestingly, when a "rougher" excursion into the mountains was eventually facilitated for the girls, the positive results that they reaped seemed to be more apparent (A. Naidoo, personal communication, December 16, 2008).

In accord with Whittington (2006), the initial assumption here seemed to have been that girls lack certain qualities which are important for success in outdoor activities (such as autonomy, competitiveness, power, strength and determination). Instead of empowering girls (it being one of the programme's objectives), such gender stereotyping might have the opposite effect by reinforcing the idea of the outdoors as a "masculine domain".

Usiko's facilitators play an important role in guiding the programme to meet its specific goals. Furthermore, their attitudes and behaviours can influence the children, specifically in terms of

[1] The organisation in which the research was conducted will be described in more detail in the next chapter.

assumptions regarding gender. Lugg (2003) refers to this as a "hidden curriculum", whereby the cultural attitudes and practices of facilitators convey implicit messages to participants. Often this goes by unnoticed. In the Usiko's programmes for girls, the female facilitators play a significant role in that they serve as role models for the participants. Any assumptions and beliefs that they have regarding gender and wilderness - whether it challenges or perpetuates male dominance - might be internalised by participants. The main focus of this study was thus to explore the conceptions that the female facilitators have of "wilderness", with a specific interest in if – and how assumptions regarding gender permeate these conceptions.

The research question that guided this study was thus, "how do beliefs about gender inform the views that female facilitators of a wilderness programme have of "wilderness"? From a social constructionist perspective, this also entailed an exploration of gender discourses (shaped by the beliefs that participants have about gender) and discursive constructions of "wilderness" (shaped by the ways in which participants view wilderness). This process will be explained in more detail in chapter 4 (Methodology).

1.5 Significance of the study

One of the intentions of this study is to contribute to the existing, albeit sparse, literature on the gendered nature of wilderness programmes. As no such study has been done within the South African context, the findings can add South African women's voices to research on the outcomes of participating in wilderness programmes. Together with contributing to the fields of psychology and feminist studies, this study also indicates specific aspects that could to be studied in future.

Knowledge gained through this study could be used as a resource in guiding the design of wilderness programmes for women and girls. Findings might, furthermore, be used for sculpting Usiko's existing programme for girls, in order meet the specific needs of the programme more effectively. Alternately, it could be used for making recommendations for future programmes.

1.6 Aims and objectives

The main aim of this study was to explore the gendered discourses in the talk of Usiko's female facilitators, with a specific interest in if – and how beliefs and assumptions regarding gender permeate these conceptions of "wilderness". The objectives were:

- To establish how Usiko's female facilitators view "wilderness"
- To identify the nature of assumptions regarding gender that inform conceptions of wilderness
- To identify the ways in which gender may influence the ways in which wilderness excursions

are implemented

- To identify the discourses that may reinforce male stereotyping of the realm of wilderness
- To assess if and how wilderness experiences challenge or perpetuate gender stereotypes

1.7 Chapter layout

Chapter one serves as an introductory chapter, and sketches a background to the study. Additionally, the problem that the study sought to address, as well as the aims and objectives of the study are stated. The introductory chapter furthermore includes a list key concepts and of acronyms used in this text. The second chapter comprises an introduction to Usiko, the organisation in which the research was conducted. This chapter serves as a means of contextualising the study. Chapter three provides a review of the literature that informed this study. The chapter looks specifically at literature on the history of outdoor-based education, ecopsychology and the gendered nature of outdoor activities. The fourth chapter provides an overview of the methodology used in this study, in terms of research design, participants, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations and validity. It also includes a clarification of the epistemological base on which this study rests. Chapter five presents a summary of the findings and a discussion of thereof. Chapter six provides an overall conclusion on the study, discusses some of the limitations of the study, and points to further research possibilities. As this research project is context-specific and takes on the form of a case study, recommendations are made as to how Usiko might address some of the problems that were identified in the findings of the study.

1.8 Central concepts

The following concepts are central to the study, and will be defined and described in chapters three and four:

Gender

Feminism

Ecopsychology

Wilderness therapy

Youth-at-risk

Discourse

Discourse analysis

Social constructionism

Male privilege

1.9 List of Acronyms

CB Court-based

SB School-based

OB Outward Bound

NOLS National Outdoor Leadership School

QLR Qualitative research

QNR Quantitative research

SC Social constructionism

DA Discourse analysis

CHAPTER 2: AN INTRODUCTION TO USIKO

2.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises an introduction to Usiko, the organisation in which the research was conducted, and serves as a means of contextualising the study.

Usiko is a non-governmental organisation in the Western Cape, which was established in 1998 with the aim of assisting male adolescents, specifically youth-at-risk[2], in their transition from boyhood into adulthood. The name "Usiko" appropriately refers to "A New Beginning", "First Cut" (implying ritual circumcision) and "Rites of Passage" (Botha, 2007). The work Usiko does is based on a rites of passage philosophy which combines rituals, both ancient and modern, with the healing potential of the natural environment, as a way of freeing up the potential of adolescents at risk (Botha, 2007).

The first intervention which Usiko implemented had a preventative and promotive focus. In seeking to offer youth-at-risk opportunities and experiences to counteract their adverse social conditions - including poverty, low self-esteem, poor education and gang violence -, the intervention was dubbed a "Diversion programme" (Naidoo & Van Wyk, 2003). The programme was run over a nine month period and participants were each assigned an individual mentor. It included weekly meetings between mentor and mentee, as well as joint activities for the mentor and mentee groups. A pivotal component of the programme was, furthermore, two wilderness excursions which participants underwent - one at the beginning and one at the end of the programme. They were specifically aimed at having participants reflect on their own lives, their own selves and their vision for the future, by means of facilitated activities. In this way, wilderness excursions served as thresholds in their rites of passage (Naidoo & Van Wyk, 2003).

The initial programme demonstrated that the combination of mentorship, ritual and wilderness experience can aid youth-at-risk in overcoming their adverse social conditions and influences. In the last few years, Usiko has expanded and now offers various programmes based on the same principles, including one for youth in conflict with the law and ones for at-risk adolescent females. The programmes are run in and around Stellenbosch, in the communities of Jamestown, Cloetesville and Lynedoch.

Usiko's objectives include:

- To develop and continually improve programmes for youth at risk and in conflict with the law.

[2] Some debate exists regarding the use of this concept. This will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

- To explore the healing power of rituals, both ancient and modern, in the development of youth programmes.
- To provide a resource and act as a collective memory for rites of passage youth programmes.
- To expose young people to the wonder and power of the natural environment, and to use wilderness experiences as metaphors for personal transformation.
- To offer rites of passage programmes as alternatives to prison sentences for young people in trouble with the law.
- To cooperate or affiliate with communities, structures and organisations that has similar aims and objectives.
- To advocate on behalf of the youth at risk and lobby and liaise with the State, stake holders and other role players to provide more powerful and appropriate rehabilitative and healing interventions for young people. (http://www.stb.usiko.org)

Usiko's founding principles include (among others):

- Environment
    - Promoting environmental awareness and conservation.
- Self-mastery and personal growth
    - Promoting positive development of individuals and families and being sensitive to the strengths and needs of each young person.
    - Provide the means for personal growth, self-mastery and job skills acquisition.
- Awareness
    - Increasing public awareness about youth at risk, diversion programmes, rites of passage and crime prevention.
    - Making young people aware of the impact of their wrongdoings on their victims and/or communities.
    - Re-awakening awareness of the importance of ritual and storytelling.
- Community and Family
    - Involving each youth's community and family in decision-making processes affecting the young person's development.
- Culture
    - Accommodating in (their) programmes young people of all cultures, sexes and circumstances in a sensitive and appropriate manner. (http://www.stb.usiko.org)
    -

2.2 Programmes offered by Usiko

Currently, Usiko offers three different kinds of programmes, namely a Court-based diversion programme, a School-based diversion programme and a Sustainable livelihoods programme. A brief description will be given of each, respectively.

"The Child Justice Act of South Africa advocate for youth in conflict with the law to be diverted from a punitive to a rehabilitative and restorative justice system, and for them to be successfully and safely re-integrated into their communities" (http://www.stb.usiko.org). Usiko's court-based (CB) diversion programme offers such a rehabilitative, community-based intervention to young offenders, as an alternative to incarceration. At the moment, one programme or "cycle" runs over two months, in which youths attend intensive group sessions on a weekly basis, aimed at facilitating learning and healing. This process provides opportunities for them to engage meaningfully with their offences, encourages emotional growth, and encourages participants to take personal and social responsibility. An important component of such a two-month cycle is a 4-day wilderness excursion - as noted in the previous section - which the youths attend. The groups that attend this programme are usually mixed in terms of sex.

Through community involvement, Usiko strives to provide healing and empowerment for vulnerable youths. This is also the focus of the school-based (SB) diversion programme which encompasses a developmental, preventive intervention that runs over an intensive 18 month period. It focuses specifically on the development of self-esteem, personal growth, identity, leadership and life planning. Through this programme, adolescents are supported in their journey to adulthood. It is offered separately for adolescent males and females. Two wilderness excursions – one at the beginning and one towards the end of the programme – are also pivotal components of this intervention.

As a further means of providing support for youth-at-risk, the recently developed sustainable livelihoods programme is aimed at improving high school attendance rates and increasing their skills and employability. This programme thus offers vocation skills training, and includes life skills training, internships and job placements. In this way, they are given the opportunity to develop their potential and to develop a meaningful vision for the future. Within this climate, they are also assisted in developing ways of dealing with the particular challenges that the environments in which they live, provide. This is the only programme that does not include a wilderness component (http://www.stb.usiko.org).

As the CB and SB diversion programmes pertain to the focus of this thesis, a description of what they typically entail will be given in the next section.

2.3 Components of a wilderness excursion

Usiko typically makes use of two kinds of wilderness excursions. The first one is a "base camp" type wilderness intervention which takes place in a remote natural setting, where the group is isolated from civilization for three to four days. The CB programme, which contains only one wilderness excursion, generally uses this kind of intervention. The second wilderness experience takes on the form of an "expedition", and typically entails a four-day hike of medium difficulty. The SB programmes usually make use of a base-camp wilderness intervention at the beginning of the programme, and then take the adolescents on a wilderness-based expedition, such as a hike, towards the end of the programme. A description of each follows below.

On the day of their arrival, participants are welcomed by a "warrior" - a role taken on by one of the staff members – and introduced to the setting. They are also introduced to ecological principles and practices. For the rest of the camp, they participate in various therapeutic and challenge-based activities aimed at promoting emotional growth and the taking of responsibility, personally and socially (Botha, 2007). Three guiding questions (typically introduced by the warrior) which participants carry with them throughout the camp, are "who are you?", "where do you come from?" and "where are you going?" Activities are furthermore designed to promote awareness of the environment and the development of relationships among participants and staff members.

An important component of a "base camp" wilderness intervention is the "solo". This activity requires of participants to spend an extended period (usually about six to eight hours) in solitude, somewhere in nature. During this period they are to remain alone and in one place. The solo provides a unique opportunity for participants to reflect on their lives, identities and visions for the future. Wilderness excursions for the CB programme, as well as for the SB programme for boys, sometimes make use of an overnight solo. During an overnight solo, participants remain in solitude for anything between 12 and 20 hours. At the end of a solo, participants are called back by means of an African drum, and welcomed with an embrace. This is followed by a debriefing session for the whole group of participants, giving them a chance to reflect on – and share their experiences. While the main idea of the camp remains the same for both boys' and girls' SB camps, there are some differences between them, which will be elaborated on in Chapter 5. Also, during the CB programme's wilderness experience, the debriefing is done separately for boys and girls.

The nature of an expedition-type wilderness experience is quite different from the base-camp type intervention (Botha, 2007). During the latter, participants partake in most of the activities - for example the solo and the exploration of intra-personal challenges – while staff roles consist purely of facilitation.

However, on an expedition-type wilderness experience, both staff and participants partake in the same, shared activities. During a multi-day hike, opportunities are created for staff and participants to grow closer together, especially "due to the increased requirements for collective and individual survival" (Botha, 2007, p. 32). Besides the stimulation of camaraderie, the hike and the natural environment act as metaphors through which participant come to make sense of their personal experiences.

As mentioned in the introductory paragraph, Usiko incorporates various activities and rituals in their wilderness excursions as a means of facilitating therapeutic and educational processes. One of them is the checking in and out ritual. This will be explained briefly, as it was used during the data collection for this study. It has become customary that a gathering among Usiko staff, or staff and participants, is always preceded and concluded with this ritual. Usually at the beginning of a meeting, everyone will be sitting or standing in a circle. Typically, one person then starts by stating his or her name, then saying something about how he or she is feeling right at that moment, and then stating, "with that I check in". The others in the group affirm this by responding with "is ja!" ("*it is so yes!*"). Each person in the group gets a turn to do this. The "checking out" follows along the same lines, except that "with that I check in" is replaced with "with that I check out". This custom serves the purpose of acknowledging each member of the circle, in whichever circumstances he or she might be finding themselves. It also gives each person an opportunity to acknowledge, and share with the group, his or her present experiences. This has become a core ritual due to its effectiveness in inspiring empathy and care, and in creating a connection among a group of people.

2.4 The researcher's involvement at Usiko

I have been involved at Usiko on a voluntary basis since January 2009, facilitating on the wilderness camps that form part of their CB and SB programmes. Currently, I am doing an additional, paid internship with Usiko as an assistant facilitator on the general CB diversion programme. Being an outdoor-enthusiast, my involvement at Usiko stemmed from a personal interest, specifically in the combination of wilderness-based activities with education and personal growth. In terms of a research project, I felt that it would be ideal to do something that would allow me to become involved in community work, especially if it involved some form of outdoor-based therapy or education. In this way, my personal interest in the work that Usiko does, as well as my interest in doing research based on Usiko's work (particularly looking at gender issues), prompted my becoming involved there. Since then, my role as facilitator has also contributed to this research project, as it has allowed me to gain a measure of "insider perspective" on the group being studied. My role as participant-observer is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

A review of relevant literature is presented in order to give an idea of how this specific study came about, and how it fits in with – and elaborates on earlier work on the topic. The purpose of this chapter is not to merely summarise previous findings, but to rather provide a critical discussion of the area of study. This includes exploring what is already known about our relationship with the natural environment, and issues related to gender and outdoor learning. An attempt is made to clearly illustrate the relevance of topics discussed in this chapter, to this study. This chapter also serves as a means of identifying some of the gaps in the literature.

As this study centres on a programme which aims at assisting adolescent females in their development from girls into young women, the first part of this chapter provides a brief introduction to some of the central theories on adolescence. This is followed by a short discussion on gender development. This study's participants have in common that they all come from a patriarchal structure. As their lived experiences of gender and patriarchy form a pivotal part of this study, an overview of gender and patriarchy in the South African context is included. The section thereafter comprises an introduction to ecopsychology and moves on to the development – and benefits of wilderness-based programmes. One of the applications of ecopsychology is wilderness therapy, which has become increasingly popular in work with youth-at-risk. This chapter ends off with a review of literature on gender and outdoor learning, as this topic relates to is the main emphasis of this study.

3.2 Adolescence

In traditional developmental psychology, adolescence refers to a stage of life in which a person moves from childhood into adulthood (Shefer, 2004). While there may not be one universal experience of adolescence, a range of biological, psychological and social developmental changes are associated with this period (Shefer, 2004). Physical changes that take place bring about a new awareness of the body. Cognitive development during adolescence includes the ability to think abstractly, to think more idealistically and to think more logically (Santrock, 2002). Adolescent "egocentrism" furthermore refers to increased pre-occupation with the self, during this phase in life (Santrock, 2002).

In developmental theories on adolescence, a key topic is identity development. One of the most comprehensive accounts of identity development was proposed by Erik Erikson (Santrock, 2002). According to Erikson, each life stage involves a crisis that the developing self has to resolve. During adolescence, the crisis to be resolved centres on experimentation with different - at times conflicting -

identities. Resolution of this crisis entails a movement from the security of childhood towards an autonomous adult identity (Santrock, 2002). Erikson's theory omitted differentiating between male and female development. In contrast, Gilligan, Miller and Surrey (as cited in Lacombe & Gay, 1998) highlighted gender differentiation in adolescent development. This topic will be looked at more closely in the next section (3.2.1).

Many cultures have rituals associated with the transition from childhood to adulthood (Pinnock, 1997; Shefer, 2004). Pinnock (1997) even asserts that adolescence "demands ritual space, a time and a place where young men and women become introduced to the unknown man and woman inside themselves" (p. 8). However, having largely abandoned structured initiation or rituals, many Western societies have difficulty in leading young people into adulthood (Pinnock, 1997). Pinnock (1997) furthermore suggests that risk-taking behaviour, often associated with adolescence, expresses a "yearning for initiation" (p. 8). Common forms of risk-taking behaviour within the South African context include substance abuse and participation in criminal or gang-related activities (Shefer, 2004). Wilderness experiences, such as the ones facilitated by Usiko, can serve as powerful rites of passage to adolescents in need of guidance and affirmation. This will be discussed further in sections 3.6.3 and 3.6.5.

Adolescence, however, is not merely an objective, neutral concept. Without denying the biological, developmental aspects of puberty, there are meanings attached to this life phase that render it a social construct. Saltman (2005), notes that the conceptualization of adolescence differs depending on the cultural and historical context. He goes on to describe how the meanings attached to adolescence have always formed part of "broader struggles over race, gender and sex" (Saltman, 2005, p. 18).

3.2.1 The development of gender and sexual identity

The physical changes that come about during adolescence affect young girls and boys in profound ways. Much of the literature on the topic describes the different ways in which boys and girls experience these changes (Shefer, 1998). Research has also shown that on average, female adolescents mature earlier than males, both physically and emotionally (Neill, 2005). Much emphasis has also been placed on the significance of female puberty in the transition to womanhood, and the role of menstruation in learning about the regulations and expectations of adult femininity (Holland et al. as cited in Shefer, 2004). Moreover, menstruation has been associated with the "crucial moment in the development of psychological disempowerment for many women" (Tolman as cited in Shefer, 2004, p. 78).

In the South African context, various studies give an indication of difficult female experiences related to puberty. For example, studies by Lesch (2000) and Shefer (1998) note the ways in which girls are seen as

needing protection during their development, because they become "vulnerable" to male sexuality when they first start menstruating. In this way, girls are given the message that they are "passive and vulnerable to men and boys, and that menstruation is a negative, dangerous transition" (Shefer, 2004, p. 78). In contrast, during puberty, boys are socialised into an active, more esteemed, masculine identity (Shefer, 1998). Adolescence is a crucial stage during the acquisition of both gender and sexual identities. Where a person's sex is determined biologically, gender is regarded as a socially mediated phenomenon. "Masculine" or "feminine" clothing and forms of behaviour are markers of gender identity which are considered appropriate or inappropriate for members of each sex category (Lorber, 2000). During adolescence, conforming to gender-specific expectations seems to be an important aspect of development (Shefer, 2004). Furthermore, sexual identity and gender identity become interlaced, so that different forms of sexual behaviour are assigned to – and expected of men and women (Shefer, 2004).

While this section highlights some issues regarding adolescence and gender identity development, the study's sample comprised women of varying ages. Despite their varying ages and that they come from different communities, a unifying factor among participants is that they all come from (or live within) a patriarchal structure. This next section will explore gender and patriarchy, particularly in the South African context.

3.3 Gender and patriarchy in South Africa

Regarding human rights, South Africa currently has an impressive constitution. There is also a wide range of legal and constitutional mechanisms at work which challenge women's oppression specifically (De la Rey & Kottler, 1999). These include the Office for the Status of Women which promotes women's rights, the Gender Commission which aims to protect and monitor gender equality, and the Domestic Violence Act (1998) which facilitates easy access to interdicts against abusive male partners (De la Rey & Kottler, 1999). However, at present there also seems to be a large discrepancy between the constitution on gender and women's lived experiences (Shefer et al., 2008). The majority of South African women remain very poor with limited access to economic or political power. They are generally poorer than South African men, have lower-paying jobs, and are less likely to be employed (Goldblatt, 2005). Furthermore, "lack of developmental opportunities, access to property, credit and skills are particular obstacles for poor women" (Goldblatt, 2005, p. 239).

Another indicator of gender inequality is the persistence of violence against women (Shefer et al., 2008). It is estimated that one in four South African women are subjected to domestic violence, although this is believed to be an under-estimate (Wright, Kiguwa & Potter, 2007). Women receive no payment for the domestic and care work that they do, and most women do not have access to child care for their children.

Moreover, women are generally expected to take responsibility for domestic work and child care, and even when men are able to, they often neglect supporting their children (Goldblatt, 2005). While legal impediments to gender equality have been removed, "legacies of exclusion and patriarchal cultural practices remain key challenges. The sexual divisions within the workplace, home and the society as a whole remain largely untouched by the many changes that have occurred (in South Africa) in the last decade" (Goldblatt, 2005, p. 240).

A cross-cultural study using this instrument, demonstrated a positive correlation between how sexist a nation's men were, and the extent to which the women of that nation supported benevolent sexism (Glick et al., 2000). Moreover, this study indicated that the higher the levels of sexism among men in a particular country, the lower the status and power of the women (Glick et al., 2000). In the South African sample, both men and women scored high on both benevolent and hostile sexism. In other words, they support ambivalent sexism (Glick et al., 2000). As benevolent sexism reflects the view that women should be appreciated, cherished and protected, it may seem less damaging than hostile sexism. However, benevolent sexism nevertheless endorses patriarchal gender relations. The two types of sexism are complementary, in that "hostile sexism punishes women who challenge the status quo, while benevolent sexism rewards those who accept conventional gender norms and power relations" (Shefer et al., 2008, p. 160).

The support of both kinds of sexism furthermore perpetuates "male privilege" in a given society. This refers to special status or rights afforded to men in a society, but usually denied to women (Feminist Critics, 2008). Glick and Fiske (1997) suggest that in cultures which demonstrate a high measure of hostile sexism, women may believe that as long as they adhere to gender norms (which generally emphasise female subservience and the idea of a "good woman"); they will be protected from male violence. This, in turn, leads to their endorsement of benevolent sexism. Glick and Fiske (1997) suggest that this might be the case in South Africa.

This study makes use of a feminist, social constructionist approach[3]. A social constructionist perspective on gender emphasises the role of language in the perpetuation of unequal social relations. It assumed that through language people draw on discourses as a way of making sense of their lives. White (2004) describes "discourse" as a "particular framework of ideas or way of understanding" (p. 9). Discourses are furthermore political in that they serve to determine the status of a set of ideas (White, 2004)[4]. The language that individuals use, usually reflect broader social discourses. Language furthermore serves to

[3] This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter ("Methodology").
[4] The term "discourse" will also be disussed in more detail in the next chapter.

legitimize, reproduce, or, in some case, challenge discourses (Shefer et al., 2008). This is also true of discourses regarding gender. In order to make sense of unequal gender relations, it is necessary to explore the role of discourse in the constitution of gender norms and gendered power relation (Shefer et al., 2008).

A study by Shefer et al. (2008) investigated the ways in which men and women in the Western Cape (South Africa) construct their gender roles and identities. The results reflect three broad themes. Firstly, participants observed that traditional gender norms of male dominance and female subservience were still salient. Gender roles and norms were also observed to create and sustain a division of labour, where the household is seen as the female domain and income provision as the male domain (Shefer et al., 2008). This theme included the construction of men as the primary "decision makers", with women expected to obtain permission from their spouses for their actions. Churches and "traditional culture" were seen as supportive of these gender norms. Shefer et al. (2008) note that "such discourses of culture and tradition have been illustrated to be significant in the rationalization and naturalization of gender roles and power relations" (p. 162). Further, similar beliefs regarding gender role divisions pervaded participants' discourses, and served to justify domestic violence.

Participants, however, also noted that dominant ideas regarding gender roles are not left unchallenged. Thus the second theme concerned a perceived shift in gender relations. This theme concerned the observation that there is a gradual increase in economic and political power for women. The third theme explored the ways in which shifting gender norms are resisted and challenged. In was noted that an increase in power for women may lead to abuse of this power and the subsequent undermining of men (by women). The loss of power and status for men was coupled with a "blaming" discourse in which women were seen as responsible for this (Shefer et al., 2008).

The findings of this study highlight the ways in which discourses regarding traditional gender roles and norms seem to sustain unequal gender relations. The negative effects of gender divisions carry over into the realm of outdoor activities. This is mostly due to a perception that typically masculine characteristic are needed to participate in outdoor activities (Allin, 2000). However, time spent in the wilderness also seems to offer ways of challenging and overcoming gender stereotypes (Pohl et al., 2000). These topics will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

3.4 An introduction to ecopsychology

Over the past few decades, the environmental movement has successfully created awareness about the extent to which human behaviour is responsible for the degradation of the planet. Moreover, Roszak et al. (1995) proclaim the environmental movement to be "the largest political cause ever undertaken by the

human race" (p. 1). This is illustrated by the fact that it has succeeded in making the well-being of the planet a crucial political concern in every industrial society (Roszak et al., 1995).

It is generally accepted that human well-being is one of psychology's main concerns. However, over the years, the field of psychology has remained largely untouched by a concern for the environment, and disinterested in human-to-nature relationships (Beringer, 2004; Metzner, 1991). This omission is surprising, given the realisation that major global, environmental threats to human well-being and survival are primarily caused *by* humans. This means that environmental threats are a direct result of our behaviour and can thus be largely traced to psychological origins (Walsch, 1992).

This omission has in recent years begun to be addressed by the emerging field of ecopsychology. This field is largely a product of the environmental movement, and has been described as a synthesis between ecology and psychology (Scull, 1999). As a component of the broader sphere of psychology, ecopsychology is intrinsically bound with the study of human behaviour in all its complexities. It is also specifically concerned with the relationship between human beings and nature. This includes an in depth investigation into our emotional bonds with the Earth and the psychological processes that serve to connect or alienate us from the natural environment (Scull, 1999).

The term "ecopsychology" was first used by Theodore Roszak (1992), in his book "*The Voice of the Earth*". In this book, Roszak raises awareness about the degradation of the earth and the role that humans play in this. He explores the relationship between humans and the earth, and proposes that our physical and psychological well-being is intrinsically linked to the well-being of the earth. In surveying literature on ecopsychology, a lack of a definitive and generally accepted definition for it becomes apparent. Hibbard (2003) observes that the diversity of articulations for the term suggest an ongoing search for an identity for this field. However, together with providing a preliminary background to ecopsychology, Roszak (1992) does indeed also attempt to define it, and provides a formulation of eight principles for ecopsychology. The notion of the "ecological unconscious" is reminiscent of Jung's "collective unconscious":

1. "The core of the mind is the ecological unconscious. For ecopsychology, repression of the ecological unconscious is the deepest root of collusive madness in industrial society; open access to the ecological unconscious is the path to sanity."
2. "The contents of the ecological unconscious represent, in some degree, at some level of mentality, the living record of cosmic evolution, tracing back to distant initial conditions in the history of time."

3. Contained within the ecological unconscious is an "inherent sense of environmental reciprocity" that can be awakened, thereby healing the "fundamental alienation between the person and the natural environment."
4. "The ecological unconscious is regenerated . . . in the newborn's enchanted sense of the world. Ecopsychology seeks to recover the child's innately animistic quality of experience in functionally 'sane' adults" and to create the "ecological ego."
5. "The ecological ego matures toward a sense of ethical responsibility with the planet that is as vividly experienced as our ethical responsibility to other people. It seeks to weave that responsibility into the fabric of social relations and political decisions."
6. There are "certain compulsively 'masculine' character traits that . . . drive us to dominate nature as if it were an alien and rightless realm." These need to be re-evaluated.
7. "Small scale social forms and personal empowerment nourishes the ecological ego [whereas] large-scale domination and the suppression of personhood undermine the ecological ego. Ecopsychology therefore deeply questions the essential sanity of our gargantuan urban-industrial culture, whether capitalistic or collectivistic in its organization. . . . Ecopsychology is *post*-industrial not *anti*-industrial in its social orientation."
8. "The needs of the planet are the needs of the person, the rights of the person are the rights of the planet."(Roszak, 1992, p. 7)

Apparent in this definition, is Roszak's use of a medical, psychoanalytic metaphor. However, on a more recent webpage, Roszak provides a shorter definition which, while still having medical undertone, moves away from its dependence on psychoanalysis (Roszak, 1998):

1. "The emerging synthesis of ecology and psychology."
2. "The skilful application of ecological insight to the practice of psychotherapy"
3. "The study of our emotional bond with the Earth"
4. "The search for an environmentally-based standard of mental health"
5. "Redefining 'sanity' as if the whole world mattered"

After Roszak's initial definition (1992), the concept of ecopsychology was expanded (Roszak et al., 1995).The articles contained in this book - written by the editors as well as by various other authors - have made significant contributions to the field (Hibbard, 2003).

3.4.1 The roots of ecopsychology

Ecopsychology has many roots, including Buddhist philosophy, various mystical traditions and the romantic movement in Europe (Reser, 1995). Freud, Jung, Skinner and many other psychologists have explored different aspects of the human-nature relationship. Behaviourists and social psychologists have explored – and made attempts to modify the relationship between human beings and their environments (Scull, 1999).

More recently, the development of ecopsychology has been influenced by the fields of ecophilosophy, deep ecology and ecofeminism (Hibbard, 2003; Scull, 1999). Ecophilosophy came about during the 1970's when the environmental movement prompted philosophers to ask basic questions regarding humanity's relationship to nature. This included the question of ethical responsibility (Nelson, 1998). Deep ecology is a branch of ecophilosophy, and essentially it emphasises the equal value of human beings and all other living things. Capra (1995) contrasts it with "shallow ecology", noting that where shallow ecology is anthropocentric, deep ecology recognises the intrinsic value of all forms of life, and views human beings as merely a specific strand in the vast web of life. Ecofeminism also emerged in the 1970's, and emphasises the connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature (Hibbard, 2003).

3.4.2 Applying ecopsychology

The natural environment is often drawn on as a means of prompting therapy and healing (Beringer, 2004; Botha, 2007; Roszak et. al., 1995; Russel, 2001; Russel & Phillips-Miller, 2002). One focus of ecopsychology has been the experiential facilitation of spiritual and emotional connection to the ecological systems of which people are a part. This has included courses and workshop on how to connect with nature, deep ecology workshops, facilitated wilderness experiences, as well as participation in environmental activist groups (Greenway, 1995; Harper, 1995; Scull, 1999). Furthermore, there may be agreement among ecopsychologists that direct, non-verbal experiences with nature are not only therapeutic for the individual, but are also necessary "if the person is to become committed to living in harmony with the earth" (Scull, 1999, p. 4).

Another way of applying ecopsychology is through wilderness therapy. In existing literature on the topic, wilderness therapy is often used interchangeably with "adventure-based therapy", "challenge courses"

and "wilderness experience programmes" (Russel, 2001). Core components of wilderness therapy include that it takes place in a natural setting, preferably with little or no evidence of human impact, that the design of the programme is therapeutically based, and that it is facilitated by qualified professionals. The wilderness therapy process furthermore utilises outdoor adventure pursuits and other activities, such as primitive skills and reflection, to inspire personal and interpersonal growth (Russel, 2001). The utilisation of wilderness as a means for healing and personal growth forms an important component of many outdoor-based educational and therapeutic programmes. This will be discussed in more detail in 3.6.3.

Two facets of ecopsychology are particularly relevant to this study. The first is the benefits of wilderness and the ways in which educational and therapeutic programmes utilise wilderness settings. This is important as Usiko makes use of wilderness-based excursions for precisely these reasons. The second facet relates to gender and wilderness-based activities. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, some of the literature on ecopsychology proposes that we experience ourselves differently when we spend time in nature, than we do in everyday life. For example, in the wilderness, human norms, values and intentions – of which gender expectations and stereotypes form a significant part – seem to have less influence on the perceptions we have of ourselves (Greenway, 1995). Literature on gender and wilderness is significant, as this is a central issue that this study aims to explore. The last part of this chapter (3.7, 3.7.1 and 3.7.2) investigates this topic more broadly. The next part of this chapter focuses on general benefits of spending time in nature, paving the way for an exploration of the benefits of wilderness experiences specifically.

3.5 Benefits of spending time in nature

The idea that time in nature contributes to well-being is by no means a new concept. Native people from various parts of the world (for example the Khoisan in Southern Africa and the Native-American Indians in North America) have for hundreds of years recognised the importance of living in harmony with nature, as an integral component to personal and communal health (Irvine & Warber, 2002). Irvine and Warber (2002) continue to describe how in medieval times, nature was a prominent part of hospital settings. Often located next to monasteries, hospitals provided courtyards for walking and sitting, and also for growing medicinal herbs (Gerlach-Spriggs, Kaufman, & Warner, as cited in Irvine & Warber, 2002). As hospitals grew independent from religious institutions, the use of nature or gardens started to increasingly serve merely a cosmetic function – something to enhance the appearance of the building. However, there are some hospitals and care-facilities that held onto the idea that the natural environment might contribute to well-being. For example, there are hospices and long-term care facilities for the terminally ill that continue to provide access to natural settings as a way of promoting health and quality of life (Gerlach-Spriggs et al., as cited in Irvine & Warber, 2002).

Natural settings seem to elicit a variety of health-related outcomes. Several researchers have demonstrated that interaction with the natural world aids the reduction of stress (Parsons, Tassinary, Ulrich, Hebl, & Grossman-Alexander, 1998; Ulrich et al., 1991). Studies done in health-care facilities in the US show how interaction with nature, for example having a garden view or spending time in a garden, speeds up recovery (Raver, 1995; Sutro, 1995). So-called spiritual benefits also appear to be associated with spending time in nature. While the notion of spiritual health lacks a concise definition, common elements include experiencing a sense of meaning of purpose, and "feeling more connected to one's self, to others, and to a larger reality" (Hawks, Hull, Thalman, & Richins, as cited in Irvine & Warber, 2002, p. 319).

Related to benefits of spending time in nature, are benefits of spending time in the wilderness specifically. Where nature refers to any kind of natural setting, including gardens, and public parks or beaches, "wilderness" typically refers to a relatively isolated natural environment where there is either no, or minimal evidence of human impact (Friese, Hendee, & Kinziger, 1998).

3.6 Utilising wilderness in the promotion of healing, personal growth and education

The concept of outdoor - including wilderness-based – learning is broad and complex, and different outdoor programmes emphasise different objectives (Rickinson et al., 2004). This point was recognised by US researchers in the 1950's who referred to outdoor education as "education *in, about* and *for* the outdoors" (Donaldson & Donaldson, as cited in Rickenson et al., 2004, p. 17). As a means of exploring the diversity of conceptions of outdoor learning, Scott and Gough (2003) set out various categories which seek to capture the range of different objectives in outdoor learning. The foci of outdoor learning, as suggested by Scott and Gough (2003), include learning about the environment (for example, through ecological field studies), learning about society (for example, through community-based garden initiatives), learning about nature-society interaction, learning about oneself and about others (for example, in therapeutic adventure education), and learning new skills (for example, in outdoor activities such as hiking, camping or rock-climbing). The intended outcomes of outdoor learning include knowledge and understanding of geographical processes and agricultural techniques, values and feelings about the environment about oneself, skills such as communication, orienteering and leadership, behaviours such as personal coping strategies or group interactions, and personal development (Scott & Gough, 2003). Scott and Gough furthermore distinguished three different kinds of outdoor learning activities, namely fieldwork and outdoor visits, outdoor adventure education, and school grounds and community-based projects. For the sake of relevance, attention will only be paid to outdoor adventure education. This refers to outdoor adventure activities in natural settings which are removed from participants' everyday environments, usually with the aim of promoting personal and/or interpersonal

growth (Scott & Gough, 2003). Due to considerable overlap in the ways in which the terms “outdoor” and “wilderness” are used, “outdoor”, as a precursor, will be used interchangeably with “wilderness-based”.

3.6.1 The development of wilderness-based programmes

The development of contemporary, structured, wilderness-based interventions is often traced back to the establishment of Outward Bound (OB) (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Kimball & Bacon, 1993; Powch, 1994; Sibthorp, Paisley, & Hill, 2003). During the 1940's, German educator Kurt Hahn developed the OB model, as a means of "preparing British seamen to survive the rigors of sailing during World War II" (Kimball & Bacon, 1993, p. 12). Many of Hahn’s early efforts were designed to develop physical fitness, knowledge of the outdoors, self-discipline, self-confidence, and compassion (Meier, 2003; Sibthorp et al., 2003). A few years after the establishment of OB, outdoor educator Paul Petzold came to feel that many outdoor leaders lacked sufficient training to lead wilderness trips safely and effectively. Subsequently, in 1965, he founded the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), with a curriculum designed to teach wilderness skills, outdoor leadership and instructor judgment (Sibthorp et al., 2003). Over the years, models based on OB and NOLS became popular in the US. They have subsequently been replicated, expanded and modified, and used in various outdoor programmes (Sibthorp et al., 2003). By the late 1980’s more that 300 outdoor programmes of this kind existed in the US (Burton as cited in Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). One such programme - developed in 1973 and modeled on OB - was the Outdoor Challenge Programme. This particular programme is significant as its outcomes were observed and documented systematically over a period of ten years.

The Outdoor Challenge Programme discussed in Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) initially involved two weeks of backpacking through a large wilderness area in Michigan. Participants were divided into three groups, namely adolescent males, adolescent females, and adult co-ed groups. Later, in 1980 and 1981, the trips were shortened to nine days. A central part of the programme cantered on learning how to navigate through - and survive comfortably in this environment. In doing this, participants learnt how to cope with physical discomforts and how to work through their own fears (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Over the years, more emphasis also came to be placed on creating opportunities for individual reflection. Research regarding the participants' experiences was conducted from the beginning in the form of feedback-forms that the participants were asked to complete before, during and after their wilderness-experiences. In addition, participants were given journals in which they were to record any feelings or reflections regarding their experiences of the trip.

Data gathered in the last two years of the programme "show significant changes in moods and feelings with respect to several domains", which include increases in self-confidence, ability to concentrate, ability

to relax, in energy levels and a positive outlook on life, and a decrease in stress (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989, p. 141). It is also noted that many participants expressed surprising new perceptions of themselves and the environment. One of the journal entries reads:

> The wilderness inspires feelings of awe and wonder, and one's intimate contact with this environment leads to thoughts about spiritual meanings and eternal processes. Individuals feel better acquainted with their own thoughts and feelings, and they feel 'different' in some way - calmer, at peace with themselves, 'more beautiful on the inside and unstifled'. (Kaplan & Talbot, 1983, p. 178)

Since the late 1980's, the number of wilderness-based programmes in the US has more than doubled and a review by Friese et al. (1998) identifies more than 700 of them. These authors define wilderness programmes as activities which take clients into the wilderness to develop their potential through personal growth, therapy, rehabilitation, education and leadership or organizational development (Friese et al., 1998). The development of technical skills that aid navigation and recreation in the outdoors may also play an integral role. In surveying how wilderness is used, this study proposes a conceptual model which distinguishes the use of "wilderness as teacher or as classroom" (Friese et al., 1998, p. 43). A "wilderness as teacher" approach makes the programme's success dependent on wilderness characteristics, such as naturalness and solitude, and emphasizes reflection and initiation. With a "wilderness as classroom" approach, the focus is more on educational and skill-promoting activities than on the setting in which it takes place (Friese et al., 1998).

3.6.2 Current research on wilderness-based programmes

The variety of methods and measures used in research on outdoor learning makes the task of reviewing the literature daunting. Moreover, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss all findings in this field. However, attention will be paid to some of the more notable studies that have been done. Reviews of empirical research on the topic include Barret and Greenway, (1995), and Burton, Gillis, Gillis and Thomsen, and Reddrop (as cited in Neill, 2008). However, they have all faced difficulties in presenting overviews of outcomes in systematic ways (Neill, 2008). Since then, a new, systematic method has been developed, namely meta-analysis (Neill, 2008). Meta-analysis is a method that integrates the results of several studies that address a similar set of hypotheses (Graziano & Raulin, 2007).

A recent, comprehensive study on wilderness-based programmes comprises a literature review on outdoor learning by Rickenson et al. (2004). This review summarises and discusses findings from 150 studies that were done between 1993 and 2003. Substantial evidence of certain benefits of wilderness-based education

is provided by two meta-analyses of previous research. By exploring a wide range of outcome measures, these studies identify both short- and long term gains. Research on young people's experiences with wilderness identifies positive impacts on their attitudes, beliefs and self-perception. Examples of outcomes include confidence, independence, self-efficacy, coping strategies, interpersonal skills and social skills (Rickenson et al., 2004).

Some strengths of this literature review is the systematic way in which it seems to have been conducted, its international focus, and its emphasis on a diversity of findings. However, it shows a tendency to over-rely on certain studies to the exclusion of others, and lacks a critical reflection on the instrumentation used to investigate the processes and effects of outdoor learning (Neill, 2006). Nevertheless, it seems to make some useful recommendations for policy, theory and practice. It is noted that most current research focuses on US and UK-based outdoor programmes only (Rickenson et al., 2004). There is thus a need for studies that cover a wider variety of contexts. Regarding programmes for young people specifically, it is furthermore suggested that there is a need for deeper insights and stronger evidence on:

- "The sorts of fears and concerns that young people can bring to different kind of learning situations beyond the classroom, and the way in which these can impact upon their learning experiences and learning outcomes"

- "Teachers' and outdoor educators' conceptions of 'the outdoor classroom', and the curriculum aims and pedagogical strategies that they see as important for effective teaching therein".(Rickenson et al., 2004, p. 56)

Emphasis is also placed on how to improve research-based understandings of the outdoor learning process. Rickenson et al. (2004) identified a need for more comprehensive descriptions of programmes and interventions; a deeper exploration of the complexity of impacts, "including the differences within (as opposed to between) groups of students"; and the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods, "particularly in the context of observational/ethnographic studies" (p. 56). In a similar vein, Sibthorp et al. (2003) emphasise the need for wilderness-based programmes to be clear on their goals, to be intentionally structured to meet these goals, and the necessity of assessing progress made towards achieving this.

Some of these suggestions have been critical in the development of this research project, which is precisely focused on female outdoor educators' conceptions of the 'outdoor classroom' (or 'wilderness') in an attempt at determining how this might impact on Usiko's programme outcomes. It is also aimed at providing a deeper exploration of the "complexity of impacts", particularly with regards to gender, and uses an observational, ethnographic approach.

3.6.3 Wilderness therapy

As a specific type of wilderness-based intervention, wilderness therapy is gaining recognition and popularity in the field of mental health care (Russel & Phillips-Miller, 2002). This is partly because it can be offered as an alternative to in- and outpatient treatment programmes, especially in the case of resistant adolescents who are unwilling to commit to more traditional modes of treatment. This is due to a variety of factors, especially the stigma associated with traditional interventions (Russel & Phillips-Miller, 2002). Many definitions for wilderness therapy are found in the literature, and the concept of wilderness therapy overlaps with much of what is written on wilderness-based programmes in general (Russel, 2001). However, it can be said that wilderness therapy typically involves "immersion in wilderness or comparable lands, group living with peers, individual and group therapy sessions, and educational and therapeutic curricula ... all designed to reveal and address problem behaviours, foster personal and social responsibility, and enhance the emotional growth of clients" (Russel & Phillips-Miller, 2002, p. 415).

Like many other wilderness-based programmes, wilderness therapy evolved from outdoor treatment programmes that have been in existence for the last 50 years, especially the OB model (Russel, 2001). While wilderness-based programmes serve a broad variety of people in society, including youth, women, people in therapy, people with disabilities, and many more, it was discovered that such programmes particularly benefit adolescents with different kinds of emotional, psychological and behavioural problems (Friese et al., 1998; Rosol, 2000). As such, wilderness therapy is most often used with youth-at-risk (Barret & Greenaway, 1995; Friese et al., 1998; Rosol, 2000). Literature on this topic is especially significant, as Usiko utilises wilderness excursions for this kind of work. Before discussing literature on wilderness therapy for youth-at-risk, it would be helpful to provide a clearer definition of youth-at-risk.

3.6.4 Defining youth-at-risk

In lower socio-economic environments, there are often increased risk factors such as poverty, unemployment, increased substance abuse, a higher prevalence of single-parent homes and a higher exposure to violence (Pace, Harrison, & Fink, as cited in Botha, 2007). Children growing up in these circumstances are deemed "at-risk", as the implications of these circumstances often result in "arrested development and a variety of social problems" (Botha, 2007, p. 11). Among other things, "arrested development" refers to academic and social underachieving, various emotional of behavioural difficulties, and being deemed "incorrigible" by school officials, parents or social service agencies (Western & Tinsley, 1999). "Social problems", on the other hand, refer to substance abuse, delinquency and socio-economic disadvantages (Western & Tinsley, 1999).

Many South African communities, among them ones which are the focus of Usiko's interventions, are also affected by similar high risk factors. While "youth-at-risk" is used in this thesis for the sake of convenience, it is, however, not an objective, value-free concept. Various definitions struggle to interpret the meaning of "at risk" (Dobizl, 2002). Moreover, the understanding of at-risk youth changes "as legislation purposes change and knowledge about psychological definitions expand" (Herr as cited in Dobizl, 2002, p. 6).

3.6.5 Wilderness therapy for youth-at-risk

An earlier, comprehensive review of research on outdoor learning, specifically the role and value of outdoor learning in adolescent development, was done by Barrett and Greenaway (1995). While its focus was mainly on UK research, it also included key studies from abroad.

In terms of prevention, it was found that some of the effects of wilderness-based programmes are likely to lead to healthy adolescent development. These include improvements in dimensions of self-concept, locus of control and socialisation. These improvements may, in turn, prevent school failure, teenage pregnancy, familial conflict, bullying, and near delinquents from offending (Barrett & Greenaway, 1995). Improvements in self-concept and socialisation may furthermore help alleviate emotional or behavioural difficulties (Barrett & Greenaway, 1995). Regarding staff roles, it was found that misdirected intervention from staff could hinder the beneficial developmental effects that result from young people's interaction with the natural environment. For this to be avoided, staff need some understanding of developmental psychology and a commitment to adopting an experienced-based, student-centred approach (Barrett & Greenaway, 1995). Furthermore, at the time, Barrett and Greenaway (1995) identified a lack of research which systematically traces the various ways in which outdoor adventure affects adolescents' development, especially from their perspectives. It was also found that little data had been generated that explores the processes involved in outdoor learning programmes. This latter finding resonates with those of later studies.

For example, a more recent study by Ungar, Dumond and McDonald (2005) explored the continuum of interventions that involve outdoor wilderness experiences for at-risk youth specifically. These authors contend that even though it has come to be assumed that at-risk youth benefit greatly from wilderness experiences, the specific mechanisms that operate in natural environments to promote health, "have been poorly understood" (Ungar et al., p. 319). This is a criticism that often appears in the literature (for examples, see Beringer, 2004; McKenzie, 2000; Russel, 2001, Russel & Philips-Miller, 2002). Subsequently, Ungar et al. (2005) explored outdoor programmes which link programme goals and outcomes to research on the mitigation of risk and the promotion of resilience in at-risk youth. Qualitative

data gathered from two programmes show positive outcomes in terms of the forming of relationships and a sense of spirituality - however, with little increase in awareness for environmental issues. Findings from the study combined with a literature review, provide a means of understanding some of the health-promoting mechanisms that operate through wilderness-based programmes. Furthermore, the importance of context to programming is emphasised. This includes immersion in the wilderness setting, rites of passage, and finding meaning and spirituality (Ungar et al., 2005).

A study by Botha (2007) assessed two wilderness-based interventions that formed part of Usiko's CB diversion programmes which took place in 2006. This study focused specifically on the "significance of how wilderness was construed, implemented and experienced" by a team of five intervention facilitators (Botha, 2007, p. 3). Findings suggest that wilderness excursions create opportunities for psycho-social development among adolescents. For example, underlying psychological concerns were addressed through appropriate challenges, group therapy and mentoring, guided ritual and recreational interaction in wilderness. This may have resulted in increased self-esteem among participants. Botha (2007) furthermore asserts:

> It challenges them beyond the daily borders of their worldview and experience. They evoke a sense of anxiety which can be utilised as a powerful tool (when skilfully utilised) for self reflection, evaluation, and the anticipation and manifestation of pro-social changes. (p. 51)

To date, this is the only evaluative study that has been done on any of Usiko's programmes. No research has been done on the role of gender in the implementation of their programmes. However, literature on this topic is generally sparse. Literature on gender and wilderness-based programming in the South African context seems to be missing altogether. The sparse literature that is available will be explored in the next section.

3.7 Gender and outdoor learning

Being the most ubiquitous difference among people, gender attracts much attention in the field of outdoor education (Neill, 1997). However, despite this trend, research on this particular topic is sparse (Neill, 2005). In a review of gender literature in outdoor education, Neill (1997) makes a distinction between two kinds of literature that fall into this category. The first type comprises anecdotal articles and books on the experiences of outdoor education practitioners. For many years, especially in the 1960's and 1970's, this kind of work was done mostly by men writing on outdoor education for delinquent boys. Only during the 1980's and 1990's did women first start expressing and explaining their own experiences of the outdoors (Neill, 1997). The second type of literature comprises quantitative and qualitative studies that do not

specifically investigate the role of gender in outdoor education, but includes gender as a variable in investigating the processes and outcomes of outdoor education (Neill, 1997). As this study is particularly interested in the role of gender in outdoor programming, attention will be paid to the first kind of literature particularly.

Neill (1997), together with Allin (2000), Carter (2000) and Collins (2000), all observe a gender bias in the ways that recordings of outdoor education strategies and processes have developed. Carter (2000) notes that until recently, material on outdoor adventure and education was presented primarily from a "malestream" perspective (p. 71). In previous years, contributions from women, together with the benefits that recreation in outdoor spaces might hold for them, were largely ignored. This was despite the fact that they often accompanied men in the outdoors (Carter, 2000). Furthermore, women's achievements were often questioned or minimised (Bialeschki as cited in Carter, 2000)

A gender bias is also evident in the ways in which outdoor-based programmes are implemented. This can be noticed in the fact that OB programmes were initially developed for men. Even though programmes have developed to become accessible to women, studies by Richards (as cited in Neill, 1997) and Miner and Boldt (as cited in Neill, 1997) both illustrated that on average, more men than women participate in Outward Bound programmes. This seems to have remained so over the years, even though the ratio of men to women has changed from 20% of participants being female to 40% of participants being female (Neill, 1997). Furthermore, throughout the years, leaders in the field of outdoor programmes have predominantly been men (Carter, 2000; Neill, 1997). Both Jordan, Friedrich and Priest (as cited in Neill, 1997) relate this to a possible over-emphasis on technical or activity skills. In conjunction with the assertion that outdoor leaders are mostly men, a study by Jordan (as cited in Neill, 1997) showed that participants at Colorado Outwards Bound School preferred having a male leader to a female leader (as cited in Neill, 1997). However, this test was conducted before participation in the programme. In a subsequent study Neill and Richards (as cited in Neill, 1997) found that where participants evaluated programme facilitators' competence after having participated in a programme, the differences between evaluations of male and female facilitators were small. Moreover, it seemed as though female leaders were not evaluated or perceived differently from their male counterparts, when engaging in the same behaviour.

Furthermore, physical activities and sports are usually classified as "masculine" or "feminine", depending on the degree of risk or physical challenge they involve. Considering this categorisation, it follows that the bulk of activities used in outdoor programmes, such as expedition work, climbing and canoeing, are conceptualised as "masculine" endeavours (Allin, 2000). Further literature on conceptions which

reinforce the idea of the outdoors being a masculine domain, as well as literature on the possibilities of challenging these conceptions *through* outdoor-based programmes, will be explored in the next section.

3.7.1 Challenging gender stereotypes through wilderness-based activities

Past research has shown that time spent in the outdoors can aid a deconstruction of gender and gender stereotyping (Harper, 1995; Pohl et al., 2000; Whittington, 2006). Author and psychologist, Steven Harper, who has led wilderness excursions which included a variety of participants (ranging from simple three-hour walks to three-month excursion into challenging, rugged terrain), for many years, observed:

> Wilderness, precisely because it is inevitably physical, raises deep questions about matters of gender in ways that, in the office, therapy may easily avoid…. Frequently wilderness evokes the unacknowledged feminine or masculine side of a woman or man. Then, discussions that compare masculine or feminine values and ways of being arise, as well as speculation about whether these are genetically or socially learned. (Harper, 1995, pp.190-191)

Emphasis on physical performance during outdoor excursions is a topic which occurs frequently in the literature on outdoor education and women and the outdoors. It is a significant topic, since physical activity in outdoor settings can be regarded as a "culturally constructed embodiment", as opposed to a value-free physical experience, as it has often been described as (Lugg, 2003, p. 38). A case study by Green (1994) explored the experiences of four female students undertaking a degree course which provides tertiary level training for people wanting to pursue a career in outdoor education. This study focused specifically on the challenges that women experience while learning and "performing in" certain outdoor activities. Its findings highlighted the problematic nature of the notion of competence in outdoor education, noting that generally it includes a "normative emphasis on physical strength, speed and technical expertise" (Lugg, 2003, p. 34).This study, as well as one by Allin (2000), has shown that even though women often enjoy physical activity and develop high levels of skill, they tend to lack confidence in their own sense of physical competence. This seems to be due to a perception that their physical abilities are not as highly valued as those of men. Female participants did, however, feel that good interpersonal skills - an area in which they felt confident - were also an important component to becoming a competent, skilled outdoor educator. They considered this skill to be undervalued in the course (Green, 1994).

An emphasis on "physical strength, speed and technical expertise" and the subsequent lack of confidence experienced by women is only one of the many ways in which women who attempt to enter the world of

outdoor pursuits, are disadvantaged. Warren (1996) has described some further disadvantages through the debunking of certain "myths" that are assumed to be true for outdoor activities. For example, the “myth of accessibility” refers to how social conditioning discourages women from the risk-taking and "selfishness" associated with pursuing outdoor activities. This is reinforced by the fact that women lack role models and economic resources that could assist them in pursuing outdoor activities. The “myth of egalitarianism” refers to stereotypical task delegation, such as the assumption that men carry heavy things and women cook. This could discourage women from partaking in certain physical activities. The “myth of square one” refers to how in outdoor pursuits, women's lack of experience in certain basic principles, such as knot-tying, is often emphasised.

However, even though women who pursue wilderness and outdoor activities seem to be disadvantaged in some ways, there are various studies which also illustrate the benefits for women who participate in outdoor activities (Henderson, 1994; Henderson & Grant, 1998; McDermott, 2004; Pohl et al., 2000; Whittington, 2006). What seems to be lacking, however, is research which provides conceptual frameworks for understanding *how* and *why* meaningful changes take place in the outdoors (Pohl et al., 2000).

A qualitative study which seems to shed some light on the "how" and the "why" was done by Whittington (2006), who examined how participation in an extensive outdoor programme, challenged conventional conceptions of femininity for adolescent girls. In this study, interviews were conducted four months, as well as fifteen months after the completion of a twenty-three-day, all-female canoe expedition. Whittington (2006) initially suggests that outdoor programmes focusing on adolescent girls' development, could "offer avenues for girls to resist social stereotypes, to challenge conventional notions of femininity, and promote positive gender identity development" (p. 207). During this study, it was observed that while participating in outdoor activities, girls had opportunities to utilise and develop certain traditional "masculine skills" (for example decision-making or taking charge), as well as "feminine skills" (for example co-operation or considering the needs of others). This supposedly allowed girls to "explore different facets of masculinity and femininity thus promoting a more diverse gender identity development" (Whittington, 2006, p. 208). In a similar vein, Henderson (2006) notes that outdoor activities which facilitate resistance to traditional female roles, can lead to the development of a new sense of self:

> In nature, conformity to traditional female roles is not required. In the outdoors, women often discover aspects of themselves that they did not know existed prior to challenging themselves in this environment. (Henderson, 1996, p. 196)

Pohl et al. (2000) allude to how literature on outdoor activities mostly examine the positive outcomes of leisure and outdoor recreation, and do not focus specifically on wilderness-based programmes. It is also noted that researchers have not yet succeeded in completely explaining the full therapeutic potential of wilderness, or "the potential value of wilderness *in relation to gender*" (Pohl et al., 2000, p. 417). In an attempt to address these gaps in the literature, these authors examined the relationship between wilderness recreation and social change for women. Data was collected from twenty-four qualitative interviews with women who recreate in wilderness. Findings indicate that wilderness experiences can influence women's everyday lives on various levels, including an increased sense of self-sufficiency, a shift in perspective, a sense of connection with others and mental clarity (Pohl et al., 2000).

Another significant contribution to the literature on this topic is by Cole, Erdman and Rothblum (1994). As an alternative to traditional therapy, they argue that wilderness therapy for women offers exhilarating, risk-taking outdoor activities as a means of promoting mental and physical health. The contributing authors illustrate the various benefits of such an approach, which include empowerment and increases in confidence and self-esteem. Powch (1994) writes specifically on the origins of wilderness therapy and on its recent (mid 1980's) application to the empowerment of women. Wilderness therapy as a means of working with survivors of abuse, incest and rape is also considered. Furthermore, two distinct components of wilderness therapy for women are identified, namely, "the healing effects of specific therapeutic activities and challenges in a novel environment, and the more elusive spiritual healing effects of a newly found of renewed sense of connectedness with the power of the earth" (Powch, 1994, p. 12).

Yet, while the contributors promote the healing effects of wilderness experiences for women with great enthusiasm, this book, too, has been criticised for not adequately describing the mechanisms which create these healing effects. Scheule (2006) asks, "Is it simply that [those] therapeutic techniques are used in a novel environment, or is the power of nature itself responsible?" (p. 619). The stories that are told in this book sound inspiring, yet there still seems to be a lack of evidence to support them.

3.7.2 Further important gender issues in outdoor education

Neill (2005) highlights the importance of taking gender issues in outdoor learning into consideration, noting that outdoor-based programmes commonly:

- have objectives, such as personal development, which engage people in questioning gender stereotypes and their own, as well others', assumptions about gender

- impel participants out of comfortable levels of physical and emotional engagement, thus invoking experiential challenges of gendered assumptions; –

- involve intense interpersonal and intragroup interaction which further provoke and highlight underlying gender issues. (p. 1)

Discussion on gender and outdoor learning can be complex (Carter, 2002; Neill, 2005). Neill (2005) uses the example that on average, female adolescents mature earlier than males – physically and emotionally. Would it then make sense to offer the same programme for adolescent males and females of the same age? How can the design and implementation of outdoor-based programmes take developmental differences into account? Another point to be considered is how males take longer strides and than females and can therefore, on average, cover longer distances on hikes (Neill, 2005). Would it then make sense to have the same physical expectations of men and women on a backpacking-type expedition? Similarly, Neill (2005) asks, "how appropriate is it to use ropes challenge course elements which rely on substantial upper body strength or flexibility, physical qualities that are more prevalent in males and females respectively?" (p. 2). With these observations in mind, Neill (2005) ends off by asking:

- Are outdoor education courses designed from a masculine mindset?

- In what ways do outdoor education programs reinforce traditional gender stereotypes (such as 'males are stronger' and 'females are more comfortable talking about feelings'), and in what ways do outdoor education programs provide valuable alternatives to traditional gender stereotypes?

- Does outdoor education programming allow for participants to explore alternative gender roles and to feel comfortable with their sexual identity and preference? (p. 2)

The questions raised by Neill (2005) are all relevant to Usiko's wilderness excursions. For example, personal development, which Neill (2005) relates with questioning gender stereotypes and assumptions, is indeed one of the main objectives. An important component of their wilderness excursions does also involve "impelling participants out of comfortable levels of physical and emotional engagement" (which Neill, 2005, p. 3 relates to the challenging of gendered assumptions). Lastly, this particular study speculates that intense interpersonal and intragroup interaction does indeed at times seem to provoke and highlight gender issues.

The issues raised by Neill (2005) have furthermore been central in the development of this project's objectives, which include establishing how gender informs conceptions of wilderness and the implementation of wilderness-based activities; identifying the discourses that may reinforce male stereotyping of the realm of wilderness; and assessing if and how wilderness experiences challenge stereotypes. The next chapter comprises a discussion of the methodology that was employed.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

On a broad level, this study employs a qualitative approach. A rationale for this serves as the first part of this chapter. However, the field of qualitative research (QLR) is diverse and is used by researchers who adopt different epistemological positions. Thus the next part of this chapter, "social constructionist feminism", serves to clarify the specific theoretical and epistemological assumptions which underpin this study. The research design, comprised of an ethnographic approach with participant observation, is then elaborated on. A discussion of the participants, ethical considerations, and data collection are discussed thereafter. Data was collected by means of individual, semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion. It was interpreted by means of discourse analysis, specifically using steps for analysis as suggested by Willig (2001). The last two sections of this chapter deal with issues of validity and reflexivity.

4.2 Rationale for a qualitative approach

Quantitative methods have dominated the field of psychological research over the last 140 years (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003; Hatfield, 2002). In contrast, QLR only started gaining prominence in the latter half of the 20th century (Rennie, Watson, & Monteiro, 2000). It developed largely "as one response to a wider countercultural critique of traditional sources of authority", and also due to the growing inclusion of postmodern and post-structuralist perspectives within academia, during the 1980's and 1990's (Madill & Gough, 2008, p. 254).

Differences between qualitative and quantitative modes of enquiry are often stated in terms of their methods. Quantitative methods generally use controlled experimental - or quasi-experimental research designs (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). The data is numerical, making it subject to statistical manipulation. Quantitative research (QNR) is furthermore associated with a positivist paradigm which favours objectivity, researcher-subject independence and empirical verification (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Madill & Gough, 2008). QLR, however, generally uses data in the form of texts, and is more subjective in its concern with understanding social action in terms of its specific context (ibid). Willig (2001) states that "qualitative researchers tend to be concerned with meaning. That is, they are interested in how people make sense of the world and how they experience events" (p. 9).

While some researchers favour one or the other, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods can add depth to a study by shedding light on different facets of the research problem (Madill & Gough, 2008). It is important to note here that these two approaches are concerned with different *kinds* of

research questions. Creswell (1998) suggests that QNR methods are generally concerned with "why" questions, while QLR lends itself to "how" or "what" questions. As such, these two different approaches yield different kinds of data. A QLR approach is generally more focused on the "quality and texture" of experience, than on identifying a causal relationship (Willig, 2001, p. 9). It is therefore exploratory and descriptive rather than explanatory. Furthermore, instead of drawing from large samples, which allows inferences to be made to wider populations, QLR generally seeks in-depth, intimate information on a smaller group (Ambert, Adler, Adler, & Detzner, 1995; Silverman & Marvasti, 2008).

A first incentive for adopting a qualitative approach in this particular study was its exploratory nature. It was "exploratory", in that it investigated a topic of which there exists little previous research. The nature of the research question also solicited a qualitative approach. Instead of having sought precise measurement of the target concept, it aimed at eliciting thick and detailed descriptions of subjective experiences relating to wilderness. Its emphasis was thus on the generation of meaning, on how a specific group of women "make sense of the world", and on the role that language plays in this process (Willig, 2001, p. 9).

A next incentive for this approach was the context-specificity of the research. This research project was not aimed at producing data that could be generalised to a wider population. Instead, emphasis was placed on the lived experience of a small sample. The goal was thus to provide local knowledge about the way in which a specific group of women conceptualise "wilderness".

Qualitative research approaches are used by researchers with different ways of understanding what constitutes "truth". The world view that a researcher adopts can also be described as an "epistemological position" (Willig, 2001, p. 9). The epistemological position of the researcher will shape the particular methods employed in a study (Silverman, 2010). Important theories which have influenced the choice of methods for this study are social constructionism and feminism. This next part of this chapter will focus on the combination of these two theories, and serves to clarify the epistemological assumptions that underpin this study.

4.3 A social constructionist feminist approach

As a strand of postmodern theory, SC contests the idea of an objective, knowable reality and instead, proposes that multiple interpretations of reality are legitimate (White, 2004). As such, human interactions stem from the social and cultural contexts in which people operate (Gonzales et al., 1994). A modernist (or 'liberal humanist') take on language sees it as a transparent means of describing an objective reality (Gergen & Davis, 1999). SC, however, emphasises the role of language in the constitution of reality.

Objects, events and identities all come into being through the language we use to describe them (Wilbraham as cited in Hook, 2004). Furthermore, it is through language that people construct meaning in relation to their lives (White, 2004). "Constructions of meaning" enable human beings to make sense of their world and their experiences. Such constructions are often referred to by terms such as "theory", "knowledge", "world view", "beliefs" and "discourse" (White, 2004, p. 8). These frameworks of ideas are used as a base for human interaction. Indeed, a social constructionist perspective suggests that constructions of meaning are necessary for purposeful action (White, 2001).

In the past three decades, feminists working in various areas relevant to psychology have increasingly adopted postmodern positions, especially SC (Gergen, 2001). A social constructionist, feminist perspective defines gender as a socially constructed notion of identity. Lorber (2000) goes on to describe gender, being a social construction, as one of the main ways in which humans categorise and organise their lives. It "divides work in the home and in economic production, legitimates those in authority, and organizes sexuality and emotional life" (Lorber, 2000, p. 52). However, gender categories are constructed to be unequal and disadvantages women. For example, Speer (2005) contends that when we employ gendered discourses, "we 'naturalize' and perpetuate oppressive understandings of gender and 'gender role behaviour' – that is, we present them as timeless, rational and natural" (p. 7).

In this study, a social constructionist, feminist perspective has been adopted as a means of exploring how gender might influence constructions of wilderness and wilderness-based activities. This approach was also adopted due to its compatibility with an ethnographic approach, which forms part of the research design. This will be discussed in the next part of this chapter. Ethnographic researchers increasingly draw on a social constructionist perspective (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008) as they are compatible and both approaches focus on the localized, context-specific features of a given setting (Baxter, 2003).

4.4 Research Design

This research project is ethnographic in character and takes on the form of a case study. It should be noted that a case study is not a research method in itself. Instead, it can be characterised by its in-depth focus on occurrences within a particular unit of analysis (Willig, 2001, p. 70). A case can be many things, for example, an organisation, a community, an individual person, an intervention, a situation or an experience (Willig, 2001). An ethnographic study typically investigates the culturally significant actions or practices of a specific group of people, or of a case (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008; Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). A main feature of this approach is the assumption that "the shared cultural meanings of a social group are

vital for understanding the activities of any social group" (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008, p. 16). Ethnographic researchers thus typically immerse themselves in the culture of the group or case under investigation, as a means of accessing those shared cultural meanings (Miller, Hengst, & Wang, 2003). Within this study, the particular group - or case - being studied was the female wilderness facilitators at Usiko. The culturally significant meanings that were of interest to me involved their assumptions and beliefs about gender, how these might influence their views of wilderness and wilderness-based activities, and how these views might, in turn, affect the structuring of Usiko's wilderness programmes.

Another characteristic of ethnographic methods is the prolonged and engaged nature of the data collection (Miller et al., 2003). Ethnographic studies usually focus on cultures or practices that are unfamiliar to the researcher and consequently, he or she has to invest time in becoming familiar with the physical, social and communicative environments which shape the research site (Miller et al., 2003). As a researcher, Usiko's practices were initially foreign to me (the researcher), and through my role of participant – observer, I steadily became acquainted with the organization and its processes. While in this particular study, repeated and varied observations did not represent data to be analysed as such, they aided the research process considerably. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section, under the heading, "Participant observation".

In line with a qualitative approach, ethnographic researchers typically pay attention to reflexivity. That is, they recognise that they form part of the social world under investigation, and cannot avoid having an impact on it (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008). Instead of denying their impact, ethnographers aim at exploring it as a "systematic ... and inevitable part of the research process" (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008, p. 17). In this particular study, I have tried to remain aware of the influences that I, as researcher, have had on both the research site and on the way in which the research process has unfolded. In turn, the research site and my relationships with participants also influenced me. This will be partly addressed in the next section, and more thoroughly towards at the end of this chapter, in the section entitled "Reflexivity".

4.4.1 Participant observation

I have been involved at Usiko on a voluntary basis since January 2009. As a researcher, my involvement has placed me in the position of "participant observer". This has allowed me to gain a measure of "insider perspective", that is, viewing the events, actions, norms and values which are relevant to topic under investigation, from the perspective of the group being studied (Silverman, 2001). As Eisner (2003) notes, "the ability to provide a credible interpretation requires a grasp of the context in which the action occurs" (p. 23).

Participant observation furthermore aided the formulation of the problem statement and research question for this study. Detailed personal observations were documented in the form of an informal research diary, which was utilised over the months spanning this research project. Together with aiding the formulation of both the research problem and the research question, the research diary provided a space for personal reflections. Field notes and personal reflections, in turn, allowed for the identification of themes that came up in later interviews with research participants, and so aided the process of analysis.

Another benefit of participant-observation was that it allowed for the development of rapport between me and the research participants, which facilitated the data collection process.

4.5 Participants

Six women, all residing in the Stellenbosch area, were recruited to participate in the study. The requirements were that they have completed voluntary mentor training at Usiko, that they have been involved at Usiko as facilitators of wilderness camps for over a year, and that they have facilitated at a minimum of three camps for adolescent girls. They were conveniently recruited as Usiko is a small organisation. Seven potential participants were identified and invited to participate in the study. Out of these seven, six agreed to participate and one refused[5]. All the participants have completed matric. Three out of the six participants went on to obtain a degrees or diplomas at universities and technicons. Their ages range from 24 to 56. In terms of racial categories, five out of the six participants are coloured[6] and one is white. This due to the nature of the programme, in that Usiko's work focuses on adolescents from the coloured communities in and around Stellenbosch. The female facilitators were chosen due to the importance of their role in guiding the programme for adolescent girls to meet its specific goals. Table 1 at the end of this thesis gives a summary of the demographic details of the participants.

4.6 Ethical considerations

After ethical clearance was obtained from Stellenbosch University's ethics committee, permission to conduct the research was then sought from Usiko. Thereafter participants were recruited and invited to participate in this study. They were informed about the purpose of the research, that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time, should they wish to. They were also assured of confidentiality and anonymity. All participants were given the opportunity to ask questions

[5] The reason(s) for the refusal was unclear.

[6] "Coloured" is a racial category that was imposed during the apartheid system in South Africa. Currently it does not come without its complexities and is often challenged. The term "Coloured" will be used throughout this text as a way of referring to a particular cultural community.

about the project, and thereafter, consent forms and biographical questionnaires were sent to all (see Appendices A and B). A convenient time and place for the individual interviews were arranged, and participants were requested to bring the completed and signed forms along to the meeting.

4.7 Data collection

Participant observation allowed for the establishment of rapport between me and the research participants. Willig (2001) notes that "semi-structured interviewing ... depends upon the rapport established between interviewer and interviewee" (p. 23). The assumption here is that trust and familiarity between interviewer and interviewee will enable the interviewee to relate more openly and in more depth to the interviewer. Data was obtained by means of individual, semi-structured interviews, as well as a focus group discussion. Interviewing was chosen as a method for data collection for the following reasons:

- Focus: Semi-structured interviews allowed me to concentrate on a pre-determined topic. Questions were designed to access participants' detailed, intimate views on wilderness. This would not have been possible if only participant observation had been used (Potter, 2003).

- Standardisation: Semi-structured interviewing provided a means for all participants to address the same set of themes. This created greater comparability in responses which, in turn, simplified the initial coding (Potter, 2003; Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

The research question as well as the aims and objectives of this particular study were informed by my involvement at Usiko, as well as by relevant literature. Literature on gender and outdoor programmes, as well as the aims and objectives of this study, informed the compilation of the interview guide (see Appendix C). As a means of testing the interview guide, a pilot interview was conducted. That rendered meaningful data which was subsequently included for analysis. Individual interviews averaging 45 minutes each were conducted over a 2-month period and participants had the option of responding in either English or Afrikaans. Questions were mainly open-ended as a means of encouraging participants to reveal in their own words, their feelings and experiences regarding wilderness and wilderness camps. In this way, an opportunity for the "emergence of unanticipated categories of meaning and experience" was created (Willig, 2001, p. 15). While conducting interviews, I was aware of linguistic variability, which pertains to the fact that a specific concept or term might mean different things to different participants (Willig, 2001). In instances where I was unsure whether I interpreted participants' responses correctly, I asked them to confirm whether I had understood correctly, or to clarify what they had meant.

Together with participant-observation, in-depth interviewing is another hallmark of ethnographic research (Miller et al., 2003). Interviews were in-depth in that they provided me the space to go beyond the surface

of what was being said and to explore participants' underlying assumptions about the gender and wilderness. Furthermore, attention was paid not only to the content of what was being said, but also to how it was being said and to what was not being said (Kvale, 2003). Being situated in a constructionist perspective, it was furthermore assumed that interviewees' accounts of the world and of wilderness are discursive constructions rather than objective 'truths' about the world (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008). A constructionist approach emphasises the multiple meanings that people attach to their experiences. However, a criticism to this is approach is that it might lose sight of substantive issues, and so "constructionist researchers face a real challenge in translating their findings back to social problems" (Silverman, 2010, p. 192).

I then transcribed the interviews[7]. This involved a close listening and verbatim transcription of the recordings. I checked the accuracy and veracity of the transcriptions through respondent validation. This involved presenting the transcripts to participants so that they could verify it. The process of transcription allowed for the identification of preliminary themes and discourses**.** Individual interviews were followed by a focus group discussion[8]. It is only recently that focus group discussions have become established as a standard data collection technique for researchers in psychology (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). Here the researcher takes on the role of a facilitator whose task it is to introduce group members to one another, to introduce the topic to be discussed, and to gently guide the discussion (Willig, 2001). As a starting point, participants were introduced to some of the major themes that were identified during the interviews. A focus group has various advantages, one of them being that it serves as a way of triangulating the interview-findings. Participants were given the opportunity to confirm or contest any preliminary findings, and also to respond to or comment on one another's contributions (Willig, 2001). In this way, participants' contributions are challenged, developed or even undermined, "in ways that generate rich data for the researcher" (Willig, 2001, p. 29). From a social constructionist perspective, this method is particularly useful as it allows the researcher to explore the ways in which attitudes may be shaped, as well as the ways in which participants jointly construct meaning. Furthermore, the focus group discussion offered a way of clarifying interview-responses that seemed vague and of exploring themes in more depth. Focus group discussion are, however, not ideal in all situations. If the subject matter is sensitive, participants might not feel comfortable with sharing intimate experiences in a group. This method of collecting data has also been criticised for creating an 'artificial' research environment (Silverman, 2010).

4.8 Data analysis

[7] See Appendix E for a guide to the transcription notation that was used.
[8] See Appendix D for the focus group guide.

Transcripts of the interview and focus group discussion were interpreted by means of discourse analysis (DA). Being underpinned by social constructionism, DA is relativistic and rests on the assumption that multiple interpretations of the world are legitimate and that instead of language providing transparent access to an objective reality, objects and events are constructed through language itself (White, 2004). In conjunction with social constructionism, DA furthermore proposes that humans make sense of their existence through "constructions of meaning" (White, 2004, p. 8). It is through texts and talk in social practices that meaning is negotiated and as such, these are often the focus in a study that utilizes DA (Silverman, 2001). However, in order to understand and utilise DA, it is necessary to first come to grips with the meaning of "discourse".

4.8.1 Defining "discourse"

Hare-Mustin (1997) defines discourse as "a system of statements, practices, and institutional structures that share common values" (p. 554). Such statements or frameworks of ideas are a means of constructing meaning, evident in speech and writing, in human interaction and in the products thereof. Discourse has also been described as "language in use, as a process which is socially situated" (Candlin, as cited in Jaworski & Coupland, 1999). In a similar vein to Hare-Mustin (1997), Candlin goes on to describe discourse, in both spoken and written form, as "dynamic and constructive", in that it structures areas of knowledge and their associated social and institutional practices (as cited in Jaworski & Coupland, 1999). Foucault gives a comprehensive working definition of discourse, namely the "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (as cited in Parker, 2002, p. 151). Parker describes three dimensions of discourse (pp. 128-132):

1.) From variability to contradiction

The purpose in research is often to test for "parsimony of explanation" - in other words, to look for consistency and undivided meaning in results. However, one discursive object or event (object or event constructed through discourse) can be constructed in various ways. Accounts of a particular object or event are often competing, overlapping and even contradictory. DA thus attends to variation in accounts as a means of exploring how fragments of meaning come together in a text.

2.) From construction to constitution

Constructions of meaning must necessarily make use of existing cultural resources. We cannot escape already existing systems of meaning, "our ideas are constituted within patterns of discourse that we cannot control" (p. 130). DA thus sees the meaning of concepts, terms, words

and other aspects of language, as intimately tied to other, context-specific meanings and activities. In this way, DA is compatible with ethnography, which suggests that meaning is always determined by context.

3.) From function to power

Language, organised through discourse, is active and serves specific functions. It addition to being descriptive, language is utilised to legitimise, challenge, support, endorse or subvert what it describes. Discourses exert power in setting out 'subject positions', in other words, constructions of identity that participants in a discourse must experience for it (the discourse) to make sense. Discourse thus allocates certain rights to speak, specifying what may be spoken and what positions which people must assume for it to work.

4.8.2 Usefulness of DA

Together with an interest in the ways in which language is used to construct meaning, DA is specifically aimed at providing a critical analysis of the ways in which dominant discourses and ideologies are created and perpetuated (Lupton, 1992). Varying discourses do not influence language, thought and action equally. Some have a privileged and dominant influence, and are usually shaped through social interaction and through particular language communities (Hare-Mustin, 1997). In contrast, subordinate discourses are marginalised and imbued with credibility and influence by dominant discourses. These are usually associated with marginalised groups (Hare-Mustin, 1997).

Feminist studies using DA have considered the ways in which gender inequalities are constructed, justified, naturalised and made factual (Silverman, 2001; Speer, 2005). They have also explored the resources that are harnessed in creating persuasive arguments which serve to perpetuate those inequalities (Silverman, 2001). Speer (2005) notes that DA is useful as a means of uncovering and "denaturalising" every-day, taken-for-granted assumptions of gender, and for challenging ideas and practices which sustain gender inequalities.

As the process of DA is primarily involved with texts – verbal and written – it is an appropriate method for analysing qualitative data. It also allows the researcher to move beyond the obvious or taken-for-granted assumptions within textual and verbal communication. As such, it would be an appropriate means of exploring the discourses that inform female perceptions of wilderness, as well as the potential role that these discourses could serve in creating or sustaining gender inequalities. The term discourse analysis covers a diverse range of work and there are various ways in which it has been applied within different academic disciplines (Edwards, 2005). Within academic psychology, two approaches to DA that have

become differentiated are Foulcauldian discourse analysis (FDA) and Discursive psychology (DP) (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Edwards, 2005; Parker, 2002; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wiggins & Potter, 2008).

4.8.3 Foucauldian discourse analysis and Discursive psychology

FDA developed out of the work of French historian and philosopher Micheal Foucault, and was introduced alongside post-structuralist philosophy in the 1970's (Parker, 2002). It explores the role of language in the constitution of social and psychological life with an emphasis on how the organisation of language within a culture provides the means for certain phenomena not only to make sense, but to become taken-for granted in being accepted as "natural" or "normal" (Parker, 2002). FDA is furthermore particularly interested in how discourse constructs "subjectivity, selfhood and power relations" (Willig, 2001, p. 91).

DP developed in the 1980's as part of the field of social psychology. A main difference between DP and FDA is that DP generally restricts analysis to a specific text without situating it in wider discursive practices, and so "evades reference to politics or power" (Parker, 2002, p. 127). DP is more interested in exploring how people use language - particularly discursive resources - to negotiate social interactions and achieve interpersonal objectives, than in describing and critiquing the discursive worlds that people inhabit (Willig, 2001). FDA, in contrast, focuses on the kinds of subjects and objects that are constructed through discourses and on "what kinds of ways-of-being" such constructions make available to people (Willig, 2001, p. 91). Another difference between the two approaches is that DP typically works with naturally occurring text and talk, while FDA can be applied to a much wider variety of texts and speech activities, including semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008).

For this study, using FDA seemed more appropriate. This approach allows not only for the exploration of female facilitators' experiences of gender and wilderness, but also for it to be located in wider societal discourses on gender and wilderness.

4.8.4 Applying DA

Many texts on DA emphasise that there is no mechanical procedure for doing it (For example, Arribas-Aylon & Walkerdine, 2008; Parker, 2002; Potter, 2003). The method employed thus comes to be directly related to the kinds of questions asked and the types of materials used within a study (Potter, 2003). Nevertheless, Willig (2001) provides a series of steps for doing FDA, which were drawn on during the data analysis of this particular study. After the transcription of the data, it was coded. Coding involved

reading and re-reading transcripts carefully in order to identify preliminary themes. This was not done to find results, but to organise the data into more manageable parts (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Themes represent patterns within the data. They are identified (or "constructed", from a social constructionist perspective), as they capture something important about the data in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While participants provided much of the input, the researcher played an active part in the construction of themes by choosing to ask specific questions during the interviews and focus group discussion. The researcher played a further role in this by choosing which themes to select and to report. This part of the analysis rendered a large amount of information, and it was decided to incorporate only the themes that were more pertinent to the focus of this study. Data analysis then proceeded according to the following guidelines:

1.) Exploring discursive constructions

The first step involved identifying the different ways in which discursive objects were constructed. The discursive objects that I explored in this specific study were "wilderness", "male privilege" and "gender inequality". This phase also included exploring variability (differences in either content or form of individual accounts) and consistency (the identification of features shared by accounts).

2.) Identifying discourses

This step involved exploring differences between the ways in which a particular discursive object (for example "wilderness") was constructed. Where it seemed appropriate, I located discursive constructions of an object within wider discourses. As Parker (2002) notes:

> "Discourses embed, entail and presuppose other discourses to the extent that the contradictions *within* a discourse open up questions about what other discourses are at work" (p. 150).

3.) Exploring the action orientation of language

This involved a closer examination of the context within which discursive constructions were deployed. Instead of being merely representational, DA assumes language to be a human practice. People use language to get things done (Potter, Wetherell, Gill, & Edwards, 2002). The words people use serve to question, accuse, justify, and so on (Potter, Wetherell, Gill, & Edwards, 2002). This part of the analysis was thus to investigate what the language that participants used

was doing. This included asking, "what is gained from constructing the object in this particular way?"

4.) Exploring "positionings"

In this next part, I examined the subject positions offered by a particular. Discourses locate subjects into particular positions, which in turn "determines the degree of agency and subjectivities that may be performed by the subject" (Kiguwa, 2006, p. 17).

5.) Exploring practice

In this step, I examined the ways in which discourses and related subject positions open up or close down opportunities for action. By constructing certain versions of the world, "and by positioning subjects within them in particular ways, discourses limit what can be said and done" (Willig, 2001, p. 111). In this way, discourses legitimate certain practices or forms of behaviour.

7.) Exploring subjectivity

This final phase was concerned with the relationship between discourse and subjectivity. Discourses make available certain ways of experiencing the world. This phase thus involved exploring what can be thought, felt and experienced from within different subject positions (Willig, 2001).

4.9 Validity

A critique against QNR has been that within an experimental, controlled research environment, the situations produced can be artificial (Collins, 2003). Usually, the more controlled a study is, the lesser the ecological validity, which refers to the extent to which phenomena observed in a study reflect the same phenomena as they occur in a natural setting. In QLR, ecological validity is a strong point, in that it is grounded in real-life contexts (Marecek, 2003). QLR is also usually strong in contextual validity in that it asks whether a theoretical model has taken all relevant factors of the social context into consideration (Marecek, 2003)

Yardley (as cited in Smith, 2003) offers three principles for ensuring validity within a specific qualitative study. The first is concerned with sensitivity to context. In this study, an ethnographic approach combined with participant observation has allowed for me (the researcher) to gain some insight into the context in which Usiko's work takes place. Reflexivity has also allowed me to take into account my own motivations, background and role as researcher, and how this has influenced the context of the study.

A second principle for ensuring validity encourages transparency, rigour and coherence in both the choice of methodology and the analysis of data. In striving for transparency, rigour and coherence, an aim of this chapter has been not only to elaborate on – but also to support the choices of research approach and applicable sample. Furthermore, during the write-up of this study, an aim has been to present the different stages of the research as well as the findings, clearly and logically. In line with this second principle, Eisner (2003) notes the necessity of justifying any claims made during data analysis. During the analysis of data and the discussion of findings, I have incorporated relevant quotes from the transcripts, in order to support my claims.

Yardley's third principle refers to impact and importance. According to this principle, validity is strongly influenced by the extent to which results obtained in a study may be useful to the existing work that has been done in that area (Youngleson, 2006). Being context-specific, it is hoped that this study might be useful to Usiko by bringing attention to discourses which potentially perpetuate gender inequalities that could obstruct the girls' programme from meeting its specific needs. On a broader level, it is hoped that this study might contribute to the existing field of feminist research - particularly within the under-researched area of wilderness and gender - by providing some insight into how the realm of wilderness becomes gendered. A further factor contributing to the study's validity is the use of an accepted theoretical base (social constructionist feminism) and data analysis procedure (DA) (Youngleson, 2006).

Lastly, as a means of checking the veracity of the transcripts, they were given to the participants to read through. In this way, participants were given the opportunity to identify any inaccuracies in their accounts.

4.10 Reflexivity

All qualitative research approaches acknowledge - to varying extents - that the researcher is implicated in the research process (Willig, 2001). Reflexivity invites us to become aware of the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences the research (Nightingale & Cromby as cited in Willig, 2001). For example, Weber (as cited in Silverman, 2001) points out that the values of a researcher shape the problems that get identified and the ways in which they are studied. Furthermore, the conclusions drawn from a study stem from the political and moral beliefs of a researcher. Willig (2001) distinguishes between "personal reflexivity" and "epistemological reflexivity". The former entails reflecting on how the values, beliefs, interests and experiences of the researcher have shaped the research process. In turn, epistemological reflexivity asks how the design of the study has defined or limited what can be "found", and how it has influenced or constructed the findings (p. 10). The last part of this chapter is concerned with both kinds of reflexivity.

4.10.1 Personal reflexivity

The topic of investigation stemmed from a personal interest in psychology, outdoor activities and gender studies. Being a woman living in a patriarchal society, my interest in gender studies has developed from both my own experiences with gender inequalities, as well as my (growing) awareness of the different ways in which women around the world are affected by patriarchal systems. I deem the promotion of the equality of the sexes a worthy cause and, as such, the choice of research topic stemmed directly from my personal values.

Gergen (2001), notes that feminist research can never be value-free. Hence, throughout this research process, I have tried to remain aware of any personal biases which might have influenced the process. I am also aware of some discrepancies in age and race between myself and some of the research participants, and that these factors might have influenced our relationships and the research process. A few of the women I interviewed are many years older than me, and have more life experience. These were the more difficult interviews for me to conduct, as I felt uncomfortable with the fact that I am much younger. Being in the role of researcher and interviewer, I was also aware of a power dynamic between myself and research participants. While I could not eradicate this, I attempted to neutralise it by treating the participants with much respect, and by showing my appreciation for their willingness to share their experiences with me. Furthermore, considering the South African history of racial categorisation, I am white, while most of the participants in this study come from coloured communities. Historically, white and coloured communities have lived separate lives for many years, and I cannot claim to have an "insider" point of view on the participants' social contexts. Initially I believed that it might be difficult to attain any form of "insider information" in terms of participants' views on wilderness. This fear was partly overcome through my role as participant observer, and the establishment of rapport between the participants and me. However, the power differential created by South Africa's history of racial segregation may have brought about a confounding dynamic. It is difficult to estimate how and to what extent our separate social contexts have influenced this study.

My involvement at Usiko has also influenced me in different ways. Before this exposure to community-linked difficulties that young individuals face, I was relatively ignorant of - and idealistic about community work. Participation in the Usiko programme made me aware of some of the complexities related to community interventions, such as how adult difficulties (for example, substance abuse) get transferred to children and how destructive behavioural patterns of older people shape the likely behaviours or youngsters. Breaking out of such community cycles is extremely challenging and hardly imaginable without fairly radical intervention. I now better understand the importance of good

organisational skills, funding, structure, creativity, the ability to be flexible, to take initiative and to assure good communication among staff. My involvement in this specific research project has further made me aware of the complexities of the subtle, yet powerful ways that gender structures operate, also in the implementation of interventions for youth-at-risk.

4.10.2 Epistemological reflexivity

With regards to the epistemological base of this study, social constructionism, I acknowledge that together with the participants, I (the researcher) play an important role in "co-constructing" the findings. As Potter and Wetherell (1987) note, our accounts of how we interpret other people's constructions are themselves constructions. As such, the interpretation that this study offers of the data is not the only possible interpretation. Billig (as cited in Willig, 2001) mentions that in DA, the analysis of a text is never quite complete. While the analysis can provide insights constructed by the analyst, it can "never tell the 'truth' about a phenomenon because, according to a discursive perspective, such a thing as 'the truth' is itself not *recovered from* but rather *constructed through* language" (Billig, as cited in Willig, 2001, p. 104). In the light of the "constructed" nature of this study, it is hoped that the interpretation and substantiation of findings in this study, will render it meaningful.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The objectives which guided the interpretation of the findings focused on how gender influences the ways in which Usiko's female facilitators conceptualise wilderness. Furthermore, as discussed in the previous chapter, this study makes use of a discourse analytic approach. A discourse analytic approach explores the action-orientation of language. Instead of viewing language as merely descriptive and interpreting results on this base, there is a focus on what language *does* (Willig, 2001). In this study, the focus was on the ways in which participants discursively construct particular ways of viewing and experiencing gender and wilderness.

The first part of this chapter comprises a brief overview of themes which were identified. It should be noted that while these themes permeated individual interviews and the focus group discussion, the identification and description of themes initiated an exploration of the "multi-voicedness" of language. Typically when using a discourse analytic approach, attention is paid to the contradictoriness of experience. This runs counter to most standard psychological research which looks for underlying psychological processes or themes (Parker, 2005). In an attempt to answer the research question, the second part of this chapter presents a detailed exploration and discussion of gender discourses and how they influence the implementation of wilderness camps. Thereafter, the focus shifts to discursive constructions of "wilderness" pertaining to the data. The chapter is concluded with a summary of the findings.

5.2 Themes

A first step in the data analysis process involved the identification of patterns in the data, and the subsequent construction of themes and sub-themes. Table 2 provides an overview of these themes.

Table 2

Themes and Sub-themes on Gender and Wilderness

General associations with "wilderness"	General beliefs and assumptions about gender	Wilderness and gender
Images of pristine nature	Women as showing and sharing their emotions more openly than men	Views regarding mixed wilderness camps
A place of solitude	Women as "carers" and men as "protectors"	Views regarding all-female wilderness camps
A place where you can "be yourself"	Women as being responsible for domestic duties	Wilderness-based activities as benefiting women specifically
Opportunities for reflection and introspection	Women as conflict-resolvers	Wilderness as a "masculine domain"
Opportunities for experiencing personal growth	Women as under pressure to conform to certain beauty ideals	Wilderness as a place in which gender stereotypes can be challenged
A place which inspires creativity	Men as being driven by sexual needs	Structural differences between all-male and all-female camps
A place which stimulates spiritual awareness	Men and women as "different species"	
The "unknown"	In the past women were discriminated against but this has changed	
	Men and women as equally competent	
	Men as occupying more powerful social positions	
	The negative effects of gender stereotyping	

As shown in Table 2, these themes are categorised according to "General associations with 'wilderness'", "General beliefs and assumptions regarding gender" and "Wilderness and gender". These three categories and their sub-themes are not mutually exclusive. They are, however, presented separately for the sake of clarity. The categories are structured in a way that it moves from the general to the specific. During this data analysis process, it was noted that general views on both wilderness and gender, precede and inform gendered associations with wilderness.

The first part of the individual interviews focused on general associations that participants have with "wilderness". Relating to this topic, participants were also asked which kind of activities they associate with "wilderness", and how wilderness might differ from every-day life. Sub-themes that were identified according to this theme are listed under the heading "General associations with 'wildernesses". The next theme encapsulates observations made by participants regarding their general beliefs and assumptions about gender. It includes proposed differences and similarities between men and women, assumptions about gender roles and views regarding gender stereotypes.

Gender issues related to wilderness is a topic which did not arise naturally during the first part of the individual interviews, for all but one of the participants.[9] It was only when participants were prompted to make the link - to think about if and how beliefs about gender influence views on wilderness and wilderness activities, and vice versa - that they could reflect and comment on the topic. This could be because of the ways in which gender is taken for granted "rendering it invisible" while in fact it is ubiquitous (Lorber, 1995). It could also be that general associations with wilderness which do not really touch on gender issues were dominant, and that it is a topic that participants had not really thought of much. In retrospect, asking participants their opinion on why the topic did not arise naturally might have provided other insights into why this might be so. Nevertheless, once the participants started thinking about this topic and drawing on their own experiences, they seemed to have strong opinions about it, albeit conflicting at times. The next part of this chapter comprises a discussion of the themes. As the process of coding the data rendered a large amount of information, it was decided to focus only on the themes that are more pertinent to the focus of this study.

5.3 Discussion of the themes

One of the primary interests during the analysis of the findings was to explore the ways in which wilderness is viewed and constructed discursively. On the one hand, participants viewed wilderness as a place where there is a distinct absence of social pressures and expectations to behave in certain ways. This also applies to social pressure and expectations regarding gender. This view of wilderness constructs it as a place where gender stereotypes can be challenged. However, in terms of the proposed skills and characteristics needed to participate in wilderness-based activities, wilderness is also constructed as a masculine domain. This latter view seems to be particularly influenced by underlying views that participants have regarding gender.

[9] In a discussion on general benefits of time spent in the wilderness, Ilse listed the opportunity to experience inner peace, and how this is especially beneficial to mothers.

The beliefs that participants have about gender and the subsequent ways in which gender identities are discursively constructed by participants, include similarities and differences between men and women, beliefs about appropriate forms of behaviour available to them, views on patriarchy and views on the social position of women. These beliefs create subject positions, which facilitate or limit particular actions and experiences. In this way, the different ways in which gender is talked about opens up and closes down:

1.) Opportunities for gender stereotypes in general to be either reinforced or challenged.

2.) Opportunities for utilising wilderness as a place where gender stereotypes might be either reinforced or challenged.

As beliefs about gender seem to precede and inform views on wilderness, it will be discussed first. Thereafter, the ways in which views on gender inform the implementation of wilderness camps, and discursive constructions of "wilderness", will be discussed. Where it was deemed relevant, the ways in which discourses identified relate to or seem to be embedded in wider societal discourses, are also highlighted. Appropriate quotations from the transcripts are incorporated as a means of substantiating the claims that are made.

5.3.1 Gender discourses

Some of the views that participants expressed regarding gender roles reflect existing gender stereotypes. In this way, participants' views seem to be informed by broader societal gender discourses. Furthermore, participants' opinions - as well as their lived experiences of gender roles seem to be underpinned by much ambivalence. For example, participants were of the opinion that gender roles have both benefits and disadvantages. In this way, they participate in discourses that both reinforce and resist gender stereotyping. Three sub-themes on gender roles that featured frequently throughout the data are the idea that women are "more emotional" than men, the contrast between women as "carers" and men as "protectors", and the view that women should be in charge of domestic duties. Each of these will be elaborated on in the next section (5.3.1.1).

Participants also expressed contradicting views on patriarchy and male privilege. The way in which male privilege is talked about both resists and reinforces a discourse of male privilege. The ambivalence that participants expressed regarding gender is further reflected by a discrepancy in the academic way in which gender was talked about at times, and their actual experiences with gender. These observations will be elaborated on in 5.3.1.1 ("Gender stereotypes") and 5.3.1.2 ("Male privilege and male domination").

There seemed to be some congruence between sub-themes regarding participants' general views on gender and the findings of Shefer et al. (2008)[10].

5.3.1.1 Gender stereotypes

A theme which came up in all the interviews as well as the focus group discussion was the idea that women are "more emotional" than men. All of the participants were of the opinion that in general, while men and women experience similar emotions, women show and share their emotions more openly than men do. Cindy's[11] observation encapsulates this belief:

> "Hulle .. 'n man is nie sommer 'n persoon wat maklik uiting gee aan sy gevoel nie. Hulle glo hulle moet rof en taai en so wees, terwyl die vrou nou weer die ene is wat maklik huil en uiting gee aan haar gevoelens en goed, maar nie mans nie."
>
> *"They .. a man is not usually someone who expresses his feelings easily. They believe they have to be rough and tough and so on, while the woman on the other hand is the one that cries easily and that can express her emotions and stuff, but not the men."*

Participants noted that this is not due to an inherent difference between men and women, but rather a consequence of social pressure for men to behave in this way. For example, Charmaine suggested that "daar's 'n beeld van hoe hulle behoort te wees wat hulle probeer ophou" *("there's an image of how they should be that they try and keep up"*). It was proposed that this might be because men fear being judged or taunted by their peers. It was also proposed that as a consequence, men often become uncomfortable in situations where emotions are shared, especially if it involves crying. Estelle elaborated on this theme by explaining that on a wilderness camp, a woman's role involves "softer" things such as providing support, comfort and compassion:

> "... enige iets wat trane 'involve' glo hulle, dis die vrou, soos die sagter goeters of sê nou maar .. of soos half die 'supporting', tipe ding of die 'comforting' , 'compassion' daai tipe goeters speel baie by die vroue 'n rol ..."
>
> *"... anything that involves tears, they believe it's the woman, like the softer things or say for example .. or like kind of the supporting, type thing or the comforting, compassion those kinds of things often play a role with women ..."*

[10] This study is discussed in the literature review, in section 3.3.
[11] Pseudonyms are used throughout to ensure confidentialiy.

In response to the notion that men hide their emotions, Alicia went on to suggest that "not all men are like that", but that peer pressure makes them conform. In an elaboration of typical roles associated with men and women, participants made use of a carer/protector dichotomy. This dichotomy is also alluded to in the previous quote. In response to what being a woman means for her, Alicia noted that women represent comfort, care and nurture. Four other participants made similar observations, contrasting the idea of women as "carers" with that of men as "protectors" of women and children. Estelle made the example that on "rougher" wilderness excursions such as multi-day hikes, men take the lead and that

> "… hulle is soos die hele tyd hulle dis soos daai hele 'protector', tipe rol dink ek. Om die 'physical' goed te doen, seker maak hulle provide, hou veiligheid."
>
> *"... they are like the whole time it's like that whole protector, kind of role I think. To do the physical stuff, make sure they provide, ensure safety."*

Together with describing them as "protectors", this quote also equates masculinity with doing "physical stuff". While Alicia attributed the carer/protector distinction to a genetic difference, three other participants felt this to be the result of a social expectation that both men and women have towards each other. An example given was how on wilderness camps, the male facilitators take responsibility for the safety of facilitators and adolescent participants. During the focus group discussion participants agreed that while male participants willingly take on this role on the camps, they as women also expect that of the men. As Melissa stated:

> "Maak 'n voorbeeld, sê dis vroumense en mansmense en as daar iets met ons een van ons gebeur, 'n mansmens gaan verantwoordelik gehou word."
>
> *"Make an example, say it's men and women and if something should happen to one of us, a man will be held responsible."*

During the focus group discussion, attention was furthermore brought to the way in which gender roles is constructed through dominant discourses regarding normative male and female behaviour. An example that came up was how in homosexual relationships, one person can take on gender roles that are atypical for his or her sex. One participant then noted,

> "Daai wys die rolle gaan nie oor wat 'innately' in ons is nie, maar wat 'expected' is. Dit gaan oor die 'expectation' van die 'environment'."
>
> *"That shows that the roles are not about what is innately in us, but what is expected. It is about the expectation of the environment".*

In the last part of this quote, the idea is thus also posed that behavioural expectations for men and women are context-specific.

The general stereotype that women are responsible for domestic also featured prominently. A common experience among the group was that in general, women are held responsible for duties such as cooking, cleaning and raising children. Ilse, in response to whether she feels there are any specific expectations that her family has towards her on the basis that she is a woman, expressed:

> "Ja, die verantwoordelikheid van die huishouding natuurlik. En kinders grootmaak."
>
> *"Yes, the responsibility of the household of course. And raising children."*

Of the six participants, four expressed a personal belief that a woman's role includes taking responsibility for domestic duties. In this way, they subscribe to this notion. Melissa, however, challenged this idea and explained that in the household in which she grew up, both her parents took responsibility for household duties such as cooking, washing clothes and buying groceries. She also noted that this might have contributed to the fact that she herself, through taking on stereotypical "masculine" forms of behaviour, often challenges gender stereotypes. She explained how her dad, in taking on atypical roles, was a role model for her while she was growing up:

> "My pa was my rolmodel gewees in 'n mate. Hy maak skoon. My ma maak skoon. Hy maak kos. My ma maak kos ... Maar soos ek sê, hy sal enige rol kan volstaan en en hy weet vir 'n feit ek kan enige rol volstaan ... Maar dis hoekom ek sê ons .. dis seker hoekom ek so is, [lag] wat ek hoe ek is, want my rolmodelle was gewees, daar was nie afgedwing op my dat 'n mansmens moet dit doen en 'n vroumens moet dit doen nie."
>
> *"My dad was my role model in a way. He cleans. My mom cleans. He cooks. My mom cooks ... But like I say, he would be able to fulfil any role and he knows for a fact I can fulfil any role ... But that's why I say we .. that's probably why I'm like this, [laughs] what I how I am, because my role models were, I was not forced upon me that a man has to do this and a woman has do this."*

Personality-wise, when it comes to stereotypical gender roles, Melissa can be described as atypical. She voices her opinion in the company of men, takes initiative, and actively participates when it comes to practical tasks. For example, she reported that where a male facilitator usually makes the fire and takes charge of braai-duties on a wilderness camp, she is the only female facilitator to sometimes insist on taking charge of making the fire and grilling the meat. Her behaviour stands in contrast to typical notions

of femininity which suggest that a woman should not offer her opinions or claim equality with men (West & Zimmerman, 1991). In the previous quote, she acknowledges her atypical behaviour by jokingly exclaiming, "that's probably why I'm like *this*". Her case is significant as it shows there are divergent cases compared to the majority of experiences.

All three of these sub-themes are ones which appear in broader societal discourses about gender, and relate to stereotypes that exist about masculine and feminine identities. The carer/protector dichotomy alludes to a form of "benevolent sexism", as described by Glick and Fiske (as cited in Shefer et al., 2008). This form of sexism endorses the view that women should be cherished and protected (by men). While this view might seem harmless, it sustains patriarchal systems by "rewarding those who accept conventional gender norms and power relations" (Glick & Fiske as cited in Shefer et al., 2008, p. 160). The view that women are responsible for domestic duties reflects a division of labour within many South African societies whereby men are expected to earn an income, while women are constrained to the domain of the household (Goldblatt, 2005; Shefer et al., 2008).

These sub-themes furthermore resonate with stereotypical masculine/feminine dichotomies which typically associate masculinity with independence, self-control, competence and leadership ability (Dugger, 1991). In contrast, femininity is often associated with gentleness, being able to express emotions, being sensitive to others' feelings, willingness to compromise and the taking on of domestic responsibilities (Dimen & Goldner, 2005; Dugger, 1991). The repetition of these differences, it seems, not only indicates – but also reinforces seemingly dominant forms of cultural identity. As Parker (2005) suggests, "dominant forms of cultural identity are kept in place precisely by the banal ways the categories are repeated" (p. 90). Gender is a central experience that plays an important role in the constitution of identity (Dimen & Goldner, 2005).

The carer/protector dichotomy and the idea of women as keepers of the household constrain women to a typically passive feminine identity. Simultaneously, it places men in a more powerful subject position granting them the opportunity to lead, to be more active and to occupy more powerful social positions. In this way, it could be seen as contributing to the creation and perpetuation of male privilege, at the disadvantage of women.

There were mixed responses when participants were asked to comment on the effects that the allocation of gender roles and norms might have on men and women. The following extract, taken from the focus group, captures some of their opinions about the effects that it might have women:

> 1 **Estelle**: 'Dependence.' Dat sy moet altyd 'dependent' wees. Sy's nooit 'independent' nie.

Alicia: Mmm. 'That you're always the hunted and never the hunter'.

Cindy: Dit laat jou eintlik minderwaardig voel. En dis amper asof jy nie goed genoeg is om enige iets te kan doen nie.

Estelle: 'No' .. Jy kan nie op jou eie staan nie .. 'no confidence in self'.

Cindy: Ja, ja.

***Estelle**: Dependence. That she always has to be dependent. She's never independent.*

***Alicia**: Mmm. That you're always the hunted and never the hunter.*

***Cindy**: It actually makes you feel inferior. And it is almost as if you're not good enough to do anything*

***Estelle**: No .. You can't stand on your own .. no confidence in self.*

***Cindy**: Yes, yes.*

By listing certain negative effects that gender stereotypes have on women, participants themselves identified some of the subject positions that gender stereotypes make available. They suggest that stereotypes construct women as "dependent" and "inferior", and subsequently create in women a lack of self-esteem and self-confidence. Participants were also asked about the effect that gender stereotypes might have on men. Melissa noted that "we do the same to them". She went on to explain that in the same way that there are expectations towards women about the kind of roles and tasks they should fulfil, there are specific expectations that women have towards men regarding the roles that men should fulfil (for example, the role of being the "protector"). They also observed that it confines men to particular forms of behaviour that hinder them from expressing and sharing their emotions more freely (as discussed earlier). Participants acknowledged their own role in creating and perpetuating stereotypes. For example, as also noted earlier, how on a wilderness camp they "expect" the men to take responsibility for the safety of the group, thereby binding them to their role as "protectors".

Alicia went on to express her personal acceptance of stereotypical gender roles, because it is "comfortable" and "because it's known". If one looks at what is being done by the words she is using, her acceptance and justification of it by describing it as familiar and comfortable, serves to reinforce gender stereotyping. The acceptance and justification of it furthermore implies an acceptance and perpetuation of the unequal power relationship that gender stereotypes create. In this way, her way of talking about gender stereotypes contributes to what could be called a discourse of male privilege, whereby male

privilege is expected and upheld. This example, together with other observations regarding male privilege and domination, will be elaborated in the next section.

5.3.1.2 Male privilege and male domination

Ambivalent perspectives were expressed regarding the general topics of patriarchy, male privilege and male domination. Participants expressed their experience of – and dissatisfaction with a social hierarchy in which men "dominate". It was also agreed upon that there are strong social expectations which keep these positions of power in place. Melissa was of the opinion that men use force to dominate, but that women also carry responsibility for male domination, as they allow and expect it:

> "Daar is klomp dinge daar buite wat jy kan doen wat mansmense nie vir jou toelaat nie. Maar op die ou einde van die dag laat jy dit self nie toe nie, want jy besluit … omdat hulle so sê moet dit so wees. En baie keer val jy in die skuld."
>
> *"There are many things out there which you can do that men do not allow you to. But at the end of the day you yourself don't allow it, because you decide … because they say so it has to be so. And often you are to blame."*

Cindy voiced a need for this social arrangement to change, but also expressed a sense of helplessness regarding the situation. This observation stands in contrast to another one. Earlier in the focus group discussion, Cindy and Alicia agreed that in the past, women were discriminated against, but that "this has changed a lot". It was observed that in South Africa, men and women have equal rights. Regarding discrimination against women, the following was proposed:

> "In die verlede was dit baie so, maar ek dink nie meer rêrig, daar word nie meer gediskrimineer tussen man en vrou nie, omdat die mense seker al gesien het maar die vrou is net so vaardig soos wat die man is."
>
> *"In the past it was like that often, but I don't really think, there's no discrimination between man and woman anymore, because the people have probably seen that the woman is just as capable as the man."*

This observation might be accurate as far as legislation is concerned. However, their experiences seem to tell a different story – for example, the expectations to carry the burden of household chores. The last part of the quote - "the woman is just as capable as the man"- affirms female competence, and could be read a way of resisting a discourse of male privilege. As such, it seems to resist male privilege, male domination and female subordination. However, the way in which the sentence is structured suggests something else.

By noting that the woman is *as* capable as the man, "the man", or male capabilities, is constructed as a norm to which women should measure up.

What became apparent during the data analysis process was a discrepancy in the academic way gender was talked about at times (for example, the observation that men and women enjoy equal opportunities), and actual lived experiences. On the one hand, satisfaction is expressed with regards to an "equal social arrangement" between men and women. However, paradoxically, participants also expressed an explicit dissatisfaction with a social arrangement in which men enjoy certain privileges. Shefer et al. (2008) notes how when some women[12] talk about gender relations, they often engage in discursive strategies whereby they distance themselves from sexist practices. It is suggested that "such talk becomes understandable in the larger context of national commitment to gender equality and the way in which politically incorrect language becomes increasingly censored in the face of gender-equitable discourses within constitutional and legal frameworks" (Shefer et al., 2008, p. 162). Participants furthermore expressed dissatisfaction with the effects that gender stereotypes can have, but brought attention to how they themselves participate in creating and sustaining gender stereotypes.

The ambivalence that participants expressed towards gender stereotypes and male privilege (or male domination) in general, seems, furthermore, to indicate the difficulty of negotiating and containing within themselves, different - at times opposing – identities. Litosseliti and Sunderland (2002) describe the notion of identity as "misleadingly singular", as individuals simultaneously identify with a variety of groups (p. 6). They also refer to a "multiplicity of gender identities" that can be found, not only across populations and cultural contexts, but also within individuals (p. 7). The difficulty of negotiating different identities, as well as the related, conflicting subject positions they might offer, is reflected in contradictions between discourses. The self is torn in different directions by discourse (Parker, 2002). From a social constructionist perspective, this relates to how "knowings and "beings" are not fixed or universal, "but constantly in process, being constituted and reconstituted, partial, multiple and contradictory, and located within the social context from which they originate" (Speer, 2005, p. 33).

In this study, the process of negotiating different gender identities has the effect of simultaneously resisting and reinforcing a discourse of male privilege. This is highlighted in an extract from the focus group discussion. It is taken from the last few minutes of the focus group discussion, where participants were "checking out"[13]. During the checking out ritual, participants reflected on the discussion that had taken place, and shared some of their final, personal feelings, regarding the topic of gender issues -

[12] The women referred to here were participants in a study by Shefer et al. (2008).
[13] This ritual is explained in chapter 2.

particularly male privilege, male domination and female subordination. I will use the umbrella term "gender inequality" in an exploration of participants' views on these issues, looking also at ways in which a discourse of male privilege is resisted and reinforced.

Melissa: Ek dink dit was nogal goed en baie keer vergeet ons bietjie die mansmense wil daar wees en hulle wil daar wees. Maar maak my net 'n bietjie bewus dat dit is daar en baie keer dan wens jy dit weg of um, hoe kan ek dit nou sê, um nou dit eintlik 'n bietjie vir jou bietjie bewus gemaak dat daar is klomp dinge buite wat jy kan doen wat mansmense nie vir jou toelaat nie. Maar op die ou einde van die dag laat jy dit self nie toe nie, want jy besluit omdat hulle so sê moet dit so wees. En baie keer val jy in die skuld. Jy wil nie hê dit moet so wees nie, maar op die ou einde dan is dit so ... en daarmee "check" ek uit.

Almal: Is ja.

Cindy: Ek is Cindy. Dis soos Melissa gesê het dit het mens nou baie bewus gemaak van dinge wat om jou aangaan. En dit laat 'n mens maar net wonder, is dit rêrig dinge wat jy kan verander of is dit dinge wat jy maar net moet "let go"? Maar dis eintlik 'n baie hartseer saak, want dis 'n saak wat .. is amper soos as jy dit gaan aanvat weet jy al klaar jy gaan nooit wen nie. So dan sê dit eintlik vir jou aanvaar dit maar. Wat nie reg is nie ... En daarmee "check" ek uit.

Almal: Is ja.

Alicia: As ek so na almal luister laat dit my dink aan 'lion King' se 'theme song', "The circle of life". En ons kan maar hoe daaroor praat, maar dit bly 'n 'circle of life. Um daar's miskien tye in sien 'gender equality and women's rights' daai goeters bring 'n hoek in 'n sirkel in, maar op die ou einde van die dag is dit nog altyd 'the circle of life'.

Cindy: Mmm. 'Yes'.

Alicia: Um so die die wiel gaan maar aan. Ek weet nie of dit ooit gaan stop nie of 'huge changes' .. want aan die einde van die dag gaan vroumense seker maar terug daarna omdat hulle 'comfortable' is en 'because it's known and' .. ja, of omdat hulle daarin geforseer word of dis 'n plek waar hulle 'safe' voel. ...

***Melissa**: I think it was quite good and often we forget a bit the men want to be there and*

they want to be <u>there</u>. But makes me just a bit aware that it is there and often then you wish it away or um, how can I say this, um now it actually made you a bit a bit aware that there are many things out there that you <u>can</u> do that men do <u>not</u> allow you to. But at the end of the day you yourself don't allow I, because you decide because they say so it has to be so. And often you are to blame. You don't want it to be like that but in the end it is ... and with that I check out.

***Everyone**: Is so yes.*

***Cindy**: I am Cindy. It's like Melissa said it now really made one very aware of things that go on around you. And it just makes one wonder, are those really things that you can change or are those things that you just have to let go? But it's actually a very sad affair, because it's an affair that .. is almost like if you were to take it on you already know you'll never win. So that actually tells you just accept it. Which isn't right. Had a very very interesting discussion ... and with that I check out.*

***Everyone**: Is so yes.*

***Alicia**: As I listen to everyone it makes me think of the theme song of 'Lion King', 'The circle of life'. And we can talk about it in <u>whichever</u> way, but it stays a 'circle of life'. Um there's maybe times in see gender equality and women's rights those things bring a triangle into a circle, but at the end of the day it is still 'the circle of life'.*

***Cindy**: Mmm. Yes.*

***Alicia**: So the wheel just goes on. I don't know if it will ever stop or huge changes .. because at the end of the day women probably go back to it because they are comfortable and because it is known and .. yes, or because they are forced into it or it's a place where they feel safe. ...*

The "it" in line 2 ("...makes me aware that *it* is there ...") refers to what seems to be - against the backdrop of topics raised during the focus group discussion - unequal gender relations. Melissa describes it as something that "often one forgets about a bit". Her statement here is indicative of how pervasive gender is, and the extent to which it is taken for granted – so much that it seems to become invisible. In lines 1-2 she also describes what might be referred to as a power-struggle between the sexes ("the men want to be

there and they want to be there"), as something unpleasant, something that "often you wish away". Also implied here is a sense that unequal gender relations is difficult to control - one cannot just make it go away but one can fantasise about it. She first lays the responsibility of this inequality on men it general ("men do not allow you to"). However, the blame is then shifted to women, because they "allow" it. In this way, gender inequality is constructed as something that is created and upheld by both men and women. Implicit, is also the idea that if women were not to "allow" it, it can be prevented. By offering a way in which gender inequality can be resisted, the language she uses resists a discourse of male privilege.

In line with Melissa's initial observation, Cindy, in lines 9-10, also notes that the discussion has created within her an awareness of the "things that go on around you". Here, once again considering the context, she seems to be referring to gender inequalities. As with Melissa's observations, Cindy's first statement is indicative of the way in which gender and gender inequalities are taken for granted and become invisible. In lines-11 ("... are those really things that you can change …") Cindy constructs gender inequality as something that is very difficult – maybe even impossible - to change. This view of gender inequality indicates that its occurrence is to a large extent inevitable, and by suggesting that "you'll never win" if you were to challenge it, articulates a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness regarding the matter. It conjures up the image of a battle, one that is impossible to win, and severely limits any possibilities there might be of resisting it. She furthermore describes it as a "sad affair" and as something that one should not accept (lines 11-13). This description construct it an unjust or immoral occurrence.

There seems to be some overlap in Cindy and Alicia's perspectives. During Alicia's check-out Cindy demonstrates her agreement with Alicia's observations, with "Mmm. Yes". Alicia starts by describing gender inequality as something which is part of "the circle of life" (lines 16-17). This observation depicts it as natural, and thus renders it inevitable. In line with Cindy's thoughts on the matter, Alicia's way of constructing male privilege closes down any possibilities there might be of resisting it. What is more, the language she uses seems to fulfil the functions of supporting, justifying, and thereby reinforcing a discourse of male privilege. In lines 18-19, efforts to bring about gender equality and women's rights is described as "bringing a triangle into a circle". While the exact meaning of this description is somewhat vague, one could make an informed guess – based on the context in which she uses it and her construction of gender inequality as inevitable – that it refers to trying to force something into a mould that does not fit. If this proposition accurately reflects the intended meaning, then it is implying that any effort to bring about gender equality is doomed to fail and might as well be abandoned.

She proposes a few reasons why women "go back to" – or accept – "it": 1.) it is "comfortable", 2.) "it is known" (or familiar), 3.) it is "forced", 4.) it "feels safe". The way that language is used here, serves as a way of justifying gender inequality. Out of these four proposed reasons for why women allow or accept it, three of the reasons (1, 2 and 4) assist in constructing gender inequality as something desirable, something that carries with it certain benefits to women and that they seem to choose freely. That it is also "forced" (4) in a sense contradicts the other three reasons, constructs it as something unpleasant and something over which women do not have much power.

Here again, there is a struggle to negotiate and accommodate different kinds of positions that opposing discourses offer. From the outside these accounts might be experienced as disjointed. However, this is probably not the case as to how each participant experiences herself and the world around her. Instead what these disjointed accounts seem to reveal is an attempt at managing conflicting desires, beliefs and experiences within the self. For example, on the one hand, participants seem to desire more gender equality in the contexts in which they live. On the other hand, there seems to be a strong scepticism about whether this is actually possible. Cindy articulated her feelings of powerlessness regarding the situation. It was also suggested that gender roles and norms benefit women in certain ways. This is despite the fact that it creates unequal social relations.

Parker (2002) suggests that one cannot talk about discourse without talking about power. When participants relate their experiences, it should be noted that there are various ways in which power can manifest in any particular interaction. Different participants may have different kinds of power which they exercise in different ways. It would be difficult to identify *the* power in a situation. Rather, "power is dynamically constructed and exercised, both implicitly and explicitly, in different aspects of a specific interaction; different participants manifest power in diverse ways as they construct their own identities and roles in response to the behaviour of others" (Holmes, 2005, p. 33). This previous extract demonstrates the ways in which power and (male) dominance are produced and reproduced through discourse. The power that participants have in how they position themselves shifts, as they participate in discourses that either resist or reinforce unequal power structures. At various times during the interviews and the focus group discussion, participants expressed an awareness of the ways in which gender identities and relations are socially mediated. Estelle referred to this process as the "stories we tell" about men and women. Her rendition of the ways in which gender is socially constructed creates an alternative subject position to the ones offered by some of the other participants' views on gender. This example will be explored as a final, more detailed illustration of participants' general views on gender.

5.3.1.3 "Stories we tell"

Estelle made some original observations on the topic of gender. The first one initially seemed to contribute to a discourse of male privilege. Estelle suggested that typical gender roles - being aligned with male domination and female subordination – come into play when men and women share the same space. She went on to explain that in the company of men there is "always a hierarchy" (whereby men lead and women follow), and elaborated by stating:

> "Waar as vroue net alleen saam is dan is dan bestaan dit (die hiërargie) nie … ja en vroue maar vroue val in daai (geslag-stereotipiese) rol in as mans by hulle is ook."
>
> *"Where when only women are together by themselves then it's then it (the hierarchy) does not exist ... yes and women but women take on that (gender-stereotypical) role when men are with them also."*

It is suggested that this is something that happens automatically whenever men and women come together. This observation naturalises the hierarchy and thereby constructs it as inevitable. However, during the focus group discussion she seemed to resist this discourse by offering an alternative, namely to start seeing people as individuals instead of allocating a person's capabilities or character-traits to their sex:

> "Ek dink dat ons sal 'forever' aanhou om sulke tipe 'discussions' te hê 'as long as we have this discussions about male and female'. En wat ons nie doen is 'n 'awareness' van 'n 'individual' nie ..."
>
> *"I think that we will forever be having these types of discussions as long as we have this discussions about male and female. And what we do not do is an awareness about an individual ..."*

She went on to suggest that the "stories" that are told in a given culture, make available to men and woman certain ways of being:

> "Baie keer soos, ek weet nou nie hoe om dit te sê nie, maar hoe ons <u>doen</u> selfs as mans of vroue, sien vir onsself <u>in</u> 'relationships', <u>in</u> 'society', word baie keer ge'feed' deur die stories wat ons hoor van 'n jong ouderdom af ..."
>
> *"Often like, I don't know how to say this, but how we <u>do</u> even as men or women see ourselves <u>in</u> relationships, <u>in</u> society, are often fed by the stories that we hear from a young age ..."*

Here, Estelle articulates an awareness of the ways in which ways of being are context-specific and socially mediated. In light of the ways in which cultural stories confine women to particular forms of behaviour and to a lower social status, she furthermore suggested that women should create their own stories about what it means to be a woman:

> "Ek dink soos ... toe ek gesê het in die begin het ek nogal gedink van dat ons moet ons eie stories weer "create". En dat ons moet "create" jou eie storie van wat dit is om'n vrou te wees."
>
> *"I think like ... when I said at the beginning I kind of thought about that we have to create our own stories again. And that we have to create your own story about what it is to be a woman."*

Both former quotations formed part of a broader discussion in which Estelle was referring to the gendered nature of wilderness-based excursions. This, as well as her suggestion that women should create new stories, will be discussed in more detail in 5.3.3.1, "Constructing wilderness as a masculine domain". However, for the time being, we can interpret her word as a counter-discourse to a discourse of male privilege which grants men opportunities to lead, to be active and to occupy more powerful social positions. Instead, she proposes that we alter the "stories" or "discourses" that shape our identities.

In this section, I have aimed at highlighting some of the underlying assumptions that inform the ways in which participants think of men and women, of the opportunities of experience and action it is proposed men and women have available to them, and of their of their respective positions in society. Many of these views seem to lie deeply entrenched within the participants, and reflect broader societal discourses regarding gender. What also came up was much ambivalence regarding these topics. In light of the ambivalence that permeate views on gender, I have also illustrated how participants, in different ways, both contribute to – and resist a discourse of male privilege. Furthermore, these participants illustrate how there is a co-construction of gender within the group. In the following section, I will aim at illustrating how underlying views on gender carry over into the implementation of wilderness camps.

5.3.2 Challenging and perpetuating gender stereotypes on wilderness camps

One of the sub-themes comprised a description of the views that participants have of mixed wilderness camps. "Mixed" camps refer to those wilderness camps where both male and female staff-members are present and share the facilitation-duties (whether the camp is for a group of boys, a group of girls or a mixture of both is insignificant at this stage). Typically on a camp, there is a camp leader, a logistics team (responsible for buying and packing food; sorting out and managing equipment; packing and unloading

vehicles), a kitchen team (comprised of one or two head chefs and their assistants), a process-facilitation team, a safety officer (or "medic") and one or two "warriors"[14]. The gender-specific allocation of tasks and roles on the mixed camps was of particular interest to this study, as it contains the potential of perpetuating or challenging gender-stereotypes.

Three of the participants were of the opinion that tasks were "divided equally", by which I understood them to refer to the size of each person's work-load. However, in terms of the specific tasks, there was a sense that certain kinds of tasks are generally taken on by either men or women. Tasks that are usually either allocated to – or simply taken on by the men, include anything to do with logistics (which usually involves physical tasks); the role of head chef; the role of "warrior", making fire[15], playing games with the children, the setting up of the night watch duty shift-list, the setting out of solo-spots and the leading of "rougher" excursions such as hiking. Tasks typically allocated – or taken on by the female facilitators include assisting in the kitchen, dishing up the food and assisting with some of the "male" duties (for example, logistical tasks or the facilitation of games). The facilitation of processes, cleaning up and keeping night watch were duties perceived to be shared among all staff members.

A description of the symbolic roles taken on by male and female facilitators coincided with some of the participants' general beliefs about gender. For example, male facilitators were described as fulfilling the role of "protector":

> "Ja, ek moet sê as dit nou mans en vrouens is, en dan hulle is baie .. hulle, die mans veral is baie beskermend oor ons, seker omdat ons nou nie .. jy voel nooit bedreig nie en jy voel nooit hulle gaan jou alleen los of hulle gaan jou .. uh jy gaan alleen moet .. nee, dis nou ek rêrigwaar kan ek nou eerlikwaar sê, as hulle 'even' jou sak vir jou kan dra sal hulle dit ook doen. "
>
> *"Yes, I must say when it is men and women, and then they are very .. they, the men especially are very protective towards us, probably because we aren't .. you never feel threatened and you never feel they will abandon you or that they will .. that on your own you'll have to .. no, it is I can really I can honestly say, if they can even carry your bag for you then they will do that as well."*

Along with constructing male facilitators as "protectors", the female facilitators are constructed as vulnerable. It is suggested that the women might feel "threatened" if the men are not around, and that the

[14] The role of the warrior is mentioned in Chapter 2.
[15] As mentioned in 5.3.1.1, there is the exception of one female facilitator that sometimes takes responsibilityfor this.

women, in this way, are dependent on men for their safety. Parallel with the belief that in general, women are "carers", female facilitators were described as fulfilling the role of "carers" on a wilderness camp:

> " ... ons laat mans en vrouens verskillende goeters doen, maar um .. enige iets wat trane 'involve' glo hulle, dis die vrou, soos die sagter goeters of sê nou maar, of soos half die 'supporting' .. tipe ding of die 'comforting', 'compassion' daai tipe goeters speel baie by die vroue ..."

> *"... we let men and women do different things, but um .. anything which involves tears they believe, it's the woman, like the softer things or let's say, or like kind of the supporting .. type of thing or the comforting, compassion those type of things with the women often play ..."*

Male and female facilitators were also seen to be representative of "Father" and "Mother" figures for the children that go on the camps - the "Father" figure as being a disciplinarian and the "Mother" figure as one who provides affection and emotional support.

To an extent, the allocation of tasks and roles reflect masculine and feminine stereotypes. The men are typically afforded duties which place them in a more "active" role and that emphasise physicality. These include buying, sorting out and managing provisions and equipment, leading the welcoming-ceremony (or taking on the role of "warrior"), and facilitating the more active, outdoor-based activities (for example games, hikes and the setting out of solo spots). They are also allocated the role of "protectors", by being held responsible for the safety of the group. In the duties usually taken on by the women, they are seen to fulfil a more passive role - for example, by often assisting instead of leading. Seen as the ones that provide affection and emotional support, to both facilitators and adolescent participants, they are also placed in the role of "nurturer" or "carer". Thus, views regarding mixed wilderness camp seem to illustrate a reinforcement of certain gender dichotomies, such as men as active and women as passive; and women as "carers" versus men as "protectors".

The ways in which the separate camps for adolescent boys and girls are structured also reflect certain stereotypical ideas regarding gender. During the focus group discussion, participants were asked whether they have noticed any differences in the ways in which the camps for boys and girls are structured. Estelle initially noted that they are not much different, except:

> " ... al verskil wat daar is is daar's in die meisiekampe is daar 'actually' meer 'focus' op die 'emotional' en by die mans meer op die "physical". So 'n groot verskil tussen ons kampe is byvoorbeeld die eerste aand het ons die 'river of life exercise' wat 'n 'deeply

emotional' ding is en hulle doen 'team building exercises' wat op twee baie baie verskillende vlakke is wat dit plaasvind. Ja. Ek sou sê hulle goeters .. hulle kampe gaan nooit so 'emotionally' so 'deep' nie."

"... the only difference that there is is there's in the girls camp there is actually more focus on the emotional and with men more on the physical. So a big difference between our camps is for example the first night we have the 'river of life' exercise which is a deeply emotional thing and they do team building exercises which is on two very very different levels that it takes place. Yes. I would say their stuff .. their camps never go so deep emotionally."

This idea that the girls camp are more "emotional" compared to the more "physical" boys camp developed into a prominent topic during the focus group discussion. An example of a physically challenging activity on the boys camp was the overnight solo. Playing games also form an important part of the boys camp and is used as a means of getting to know each other better. The substitution of processes which facilitate deep sharing with the playing of games was regarded by participants as "superficial". It was suggested that the all-male camps include only one process in which reflection and deep sharing takes place, namely the debriefing after the solo. In an elaboration of this topic, participants' input and responses were mixed and, in some instances, contradictory.

Participants traced aforementioned differences in structure back to a general assumption about gender, namely that women are more "emotional" and that men do not show and share their emotions easily. All participants initially seemed to feel positive about aligning activities with expected gendered behaviour, proposing that as it is more familiar to the adolescents, it would be more effective. As a way of substantiating this claim, and in referring to the girls camps specifically, Alicia expressed the following:

"... as ek nou daaraan dink nou um miskien hoekom ons nog so werk met die meisies is dat as ek 'completely' iemand skrik met 'out of their zone experience, you're not gonna get their cooperation. But the only way to get them to cooperate is to start with the point where they're familiar with and take them to where you want them to go'."

"... if I think about it now um maybe why we still work like this with the girls is that if I completely scare someone with out of their zone experience, you're not gonna get their cooperation. But the only way to get them to cooperate is to start with the point where they're familiar with and take them to where you want them to go."

Participants also felt that if the camps were structured in ways that challenge these stereotypes (for example, including activities on the girls-camps that are physically more challenging, and activities that encourage more talking and sharing on a the boys-camps), the activities would not only be ineffective (with regards to the programme aims), but possibly even harmful to the adolescents. It was stated that a reversal of typical gendered activities would be "too unfamiliar", "stressful" for the adolescents, that they might "perceive it as rejection", and that "you're not gonna get their co-operation". In response to the suggestion of an overnight solo for the girls, it was suggested that it would "break them down" and "tear them apart":

> "Want dit is nogal stresvol om in die nag uit te gaan ... Selfs die seuns is bang. Nou 'imagine' jy moet die meisiekinders .. hulle .. die goed waarmee hulle 'deal' is meer 'emotional' goeters. As jy vir hulle gaan uitsit gaan jy hulle op .. jy gaan hulle afbreek. Jy gaan hulle uitmekaar uit skeur en dit gaan nie goed wees vir hulle nie. Dit gaan vir hulle te veel wees."

> *"Because it is quite stressful to go out into the night ... Even the boys are scared. Now imagine with the girls you have to .. they .. the things with which they are dealing are more emotional things. If you go and put them out you are going to up .. you are going to break them down. You are going to tear them apart and it will not be good for them. It will be too much with them."*

The effects that it might have on the boys if the camps were structured to challenge gender stereotypes were not mentioned. However, Cindy did noted that by structuring camps in a way that enforces these stereotypes, the boys might be deprived of exploring alternative ways of being. For example, being able to express their emotions more openly:

> "Ek dink baie van die seuns sal ook eintlik rêrig uiting aan hulle gevoelens wil gee as hulle toegelaat word. Maar ek dink hulle word 'somehow' .. voel hulle seker maar hulle word geblok om dit te kan doen."

> *"I think many of the boys would actually also like to express their feelings if they are allowed to. But I think that somehow they are .. probably feel they are blocked from doing it."*

If one looks closer at the language that participants use to substantiate these claims, it again seems to construct women as more vulnerable than men. In stating that an overnight solo would "tear [the girls]

apart", it is unclear whether it is meant to be interpreted in a physical or an emotional sense. It could mean that physically, girls would not be able to meet the demands of an overnight solo, or it might mean that the experience would be psychologically challenging. Both of these two meanings, however, construct girls as weaker in some way. In this way, opportunities for girls to partake in similar experiences and forms of behaviour made available to boys, become restricted. I pointed out to participants a discrepancy in their accounts – how, by structuring the camps in this way, they seem to consciously enforce and perpetuate gender stereotypes, while earlier they discussed the negative effects that gender stereotyping can have on women and men. They agreed that they were reinforcing these stereotypes, and while they felt the structuring of camps in this way to carry certain benefits, they also noted how it might disadvantage the adolescents by depriving them of exploring alternative ways of being and interacting. Estelle suggested that every person has "masculine" and "feminine" energies and that including atypical gender activities might help a woman to explore her "masculine" side, and vice versa. In response to how it might be if on a camp, there is a man that cooks and that shares his feelings, and a woman that leads a hiking excursion, she noted the following:

> "Dit sal 'stimulate' dat altwee [tipe energië] uitkom en jy nie net 'focus' op jou 'feminine' nie of net op jou 'masculine' nie. Want as hulle gaan sien dat die 'roles' van vrou is net soos dit [stereotipies] is, die seuns gaan heel moontlik baie meer 'masculine' wees en nie van hulle 'feminine energies' wys nie …"
>
> *"It will stimulate that both [types of energies] come out and that you do not just focus on your feminine or your masculine. Because if they were to see that the roles of woman is just like that [stereotypical], the boys will most probably be more masculine and will not show some of their feminine energies ..."*

Here, Estelle describes an opportunity to explore both masculine and feminine ways of being as something positive, the implication perhaps being that it fosters the development of a more balanced and diverse sense of self.

The construction of women as vulnerable and physically less competent than men - in both the allocation of tasks on mixed camps, as well as the way in which boys and girls camps are structured – stands in contrast to the views that participants expressed regarding all-female camps. Usually with the girls' camps, the facilitation team also consists of women only. Most of the time, some of the male staff will help with the packing and unpacking of the vehicles. Otherwise, on all-female wilderness camps, the women are responsible for all the other duties. All of the participants had positive associations with all-female wilderness camps. Having to take on the whole range of duties, especially the ones usually

fulfilled by men, was described as enjoyable, as liberating (referring to a feeling of "not needing men" and not being "curbed" by men), and as an achievement to be proud of. Charmaine expressed this in the following way:

> "Maar dit dit het eintlik .. jy't eintlik besef dat ons as vrouens selfstandig op ons eie goed kan doen. Dat ons nie afhanklik is van mans om alles vir ons te kan doen nie."
>
> *"But that that actually .. you actually realised that we as women can do things on our own independently. That we are not dependent on men to do everything for us."*

What is implied by this statement is that there are other times when female facilitators become dependent on the men for doing certain things for them. Similar views were expressed by the participants regarding mixed wilderness camps. They do not seem to become dependent on men as a result of lack of capabilities to do the things that men do for them. Instead, this dependence or passivity is described as a form of learnt behaviour that comes into play when men and women share the same space. Referring to how the male facilitators usually take on the more physically demanding tasks, Charmaine noted that "the women are at times a bit lazy". Furthermore, participants noted that men sometimes enforce gender specific behaviour, but that women also "allow" and "expect" it (as described in the 5.3.1.2). Participants go on to describe the libratory potential of an all-female wilderness camp to mobilize women out of their learnt passivity. Women are forced into atypical roles which challenge them and give them opportunities to explore different ways if being. As Melissa noted:

> "Ma op daai kamp kon jy nou, eh, explore het en, jy kon (1.5) da's nie 'n mansmens wat vir jou sê jy mag dit nie doen nie, of jou curb nie."
>
> *"But on that camp you could, eh, explore and, you could (1.5) there isn't a man that tells you you're not allowed to do this, or that curbs you."*

On a different note, Estelle described the all-female camps as "deeper" in the sense that facilitators and participants can express themselves more openly and relate to each other more sincerely. She contrasted this with mixed camp as having an element of "superficiality", in that when men and women come together, gender-specific behaviour is reinforced:

> "As daar mans en vrouens is daar altyd 'n level van oppervlakkigheid omdat dis soos maskers en sekere rolle wat jy nogsteeds dan saam met jou dra. Maar wanneer dit net

> vroue is dan voel dit daar's baie meer van jou .. rolle wat jy in civilization het of so wat jy kan afskud en kan los en 'actually' net die 'true' wie jy is kan bring."
>
> *"If there is men and women there is always a level of superficiality because it's like masks and certain roles which you still then carry with you. But when it is only women then it feels as if there's a lot more of your .. roles that you have in civilisation or so that you can shake off and can leave and actually just bring the true who you are."*

In this quote, gender roles and expectations are described as "masks" that are worn, which obscures a true self. This is a metaphor that was used often, and will be explored in more detail in 5.3.3.2 ("Constructing wilderness as a place where gender stereotypes might be challenged"). It is furthermore suggested that all-female wilderness camps provide the opportunity for women to experience a sense of being liberated from the burden of social expectations. In this way, all-female wilderness camps are constructed as empowering to women. The contrast between this view and the view that the perpetuation of gender stereotypes on camps is beneficial again reflects the difficulty in managing conflicting subject positions and desires. On the one hand, participants are attached to some of the stereotypes. Being "comfortable" and "known" (as described in 5.3.1.2), it seems to form an integral part of their identities as women and it also benefits them in some ways. Gender stereotypes which construct women as passive seem to have certain benefits for women. They enable women to enjoy letting the men do the more active work, and to see to the safety of the group. At the same time, they describe the opportunity to partake in activities which challenge gender stereotypes as enjoyable and empowering.

In this section, I have aimed to identify the ways in which ambivalent views on gender influence the implementation of wilderness camps. What is highlighted is a double-bind situation. On the one hand, participants view gender stereotypes as something which disadvantages men and women in terms the forms of behaviour it makes available to them. It also disadvantages women specifically, in that it creates and recreates unequal power structures. On the other hand, some of the participants are of the view that gender stereotypes carry with them certain benefits. The construction of gender stereotyping as familiar to the extent that it becomes desirable, is indicative of the power of gender as a social institution, as well as its pivotal role in the constitution of identity. The view that gender stereotypes carry benefits, as mentioned before, is in spite of the fact that they contribute to the perpetuation of a social hierarchy which oppresses women. In the next section, the ways in which participants view, describe and discursively construct "wilderness" is explored. It also entails a particular focus on how beliefs about gender precede and inform these views.

5.3.3 Discursive constructions of "wilderness"

Some of the general views that participants had of wilderness, as listed in the first column of Table 2, were unconnected to gender issues. However, as a primary aim in this study was to explore the ways in which beliefs about gender might influence how wilderness is conceptualised, it was decided to focus only on the views and experiences of wilderness that seemed to relate to gender issues. In light of the focus of this study, there are two ways in which wilderness is constructed, which stand out. The first construction depicts wilderness as a masculine domain. In other words, the skills and characteristics that participants associate with participating in wilderness activities are typically masculine traits. The second construction stands in contrast to the first, and entails a depiction of wilderness as a place where gender stereotypes might be challenged. Each one will be discussed respectively.

5.3.3.1 Constructing wilderness as a masculine domain

During the individuals, participants described some of the skills or attributes they thought are needed to participate in wilderness-based activities, such as camping or hiking. These included the ability to take risks, being "independent", the ability to take responsibility for yourself and/or voice your needs when necessary, the ability to "improvise", the ability to "take initiative", being "more active", "wanting to go beyond your limits" and being "adventurous". Taking into consideration the classic dichotomy of masculinity as "active" and femininity as "passive" (Dimen & Goldner, 2005), all of these traits seem to relate to a masculine, active (or even proactive) way of being. During the focus group discussion, the idea that survival, exploration and recreation in the wilderness are often associated with typically masculine characteristics, and are seen as activities that men partake in, was again introduced. Participants were invited to agree or disagree and to share their opinion on the matter if they wanted to. Three participants responded by immediately agreeing. In terms of wilderness as a masculine domain in general, Estelle started off by stating that gender roles are produced through cultural "stories" that we hear and internalize at a young age. This observation was introduced in 5.3.1.3 ("Stories we tell"). Having grown up in a Christian context, she used an example of how in the Bible there are many stories of men venturing into the wilderness by themselves, but none of women that do the same. It was furthermore noted that the "cultural stories" that we hear from a young age (and are likely to internalise), construct activities associated with wilderness experiences as masculine endeavours. This is illustrated in the following quote:

> "Baie keer soos, ek weet nou nie hoe om dit te sê nie, maar hoe ons doen selfs as mans of vroue, sien vir onsself in 'relationships', in 'society', word baie keer ge'feed' deur die stories wat ons hoor van 'n jong ouderdom af ... En as jy gaan kyk .. die Bybel, kulturele

> stories, al daai goeters is vol stories van mans wat in die wildernis gaan of wat "fore runners" is, wat op hulle eie gaan, maar nêrens 'n vrou nie. So al ons stories, ons hele "frame of reference" wys net dat dit is wat die man kan doen .. en die man uitgaan en gaan jag. Die vrou bly daar by die kinders. Die vrou is die 'nurturer'. Sy gaan nie uit nie."
>
> *"Often like, I don't know how to say this, but how we do even as men or women see ourselves in relationships, in society, are often fed by the stories that we hear from a young age ... And if you go and look in the Bible, cultural stories, all those things are full of stories about men that go into the wilderness or that are forerunners, that go on their own, but nowhere a woman. So all of our stories, our whole frame of reference just shows that this is what the man can do .. and the man goes out and goes hunting. The woman stays there with the children. The woman is the "nurturer". She doesn't go out".*

Here, by referring to stories that shape how men and women "do", and "see (themselves) in relationships, in society", her observation again highlights the constructed nature of gender roles. It is also suggested that there is a socially mediated view about wilderness which grants men opportunities partake in wilderness-based activities more freely that women. It is proposed that this view is influenced by the feminine gender roles of "carer" and "nurturer", which restrict women to the sphere of the household. In this way, her observations propose the subject positions that this particular construction of wilderness makes available to both men and women. While it affords men freedom of movement, it limits a woman's choice of actions, particularly if it entails masculine forms of behaviour. For example, it limits women from making solo trips into the wilderness. Delay and Dyment (2003) associate masculine characteristics with autonomy, technical skill, physical strength and assertiveness, and note that these are often emphasised in outdoor-based activities. While the participant does not seem to agree with the view that wilderness-based activities are masculine endeavours, she presents it as a general understanding of wilderness and gender. As a way resisting what she presents as a dominant discourse on wilderness, she goes on to suggest that women should "create their own stories" about female capabilities and about what it means to be a woman.

Another point that was brought up, relating to Usiko's wilderness excursion specifically, was that on more challenging excursions such as multi-day hikes, the men take the lead and the women follow. Melissa noted that on such excursions, the men are automatically made responsible for the general safety of the group. In this way, their positions as "protectors" are reinforced. She goes on to explain that even though women "are also capable" of taking the lead, "it has become a tradition within Usiko that the men do it". She was of the opinion that if the roles were reversed "the men would not trust it" and,

furthermore, that the women willingly adopt a docile position, particularly when both male and female facilitators are present. This observation highlights the familiarity of gender roles, and the way in which they are subsequently accepted and perpetuated. The acceptance of these gender roles within the realm of wilderness, serve as a means of reinforcing the idea of wilderness as a masculine domain.

Another participant suggested that within Usiko, male facilitators likewise limit women's freedom of choice, when it comes to wilderness-related activities. She recalled an incident where she and another female facilitator had planned on sleeping out in the open air by themselves. However, some of the men on the camp prevented them from going on the assumption that it would be too dangerous for them[16]. This was regardless of the fact that some of the men, at times, go and sleep out in the open air away from the other facilitators. The participant recalled having then felt powerless, frustrated and indignant:

> "En hulle het .. ja, hulle het gediskrimineer op 'n sekere 'level' en ek het kwaad geraak daaroor, want hoe kan hulle vir my sê ek kan nie daar gaan slaap nie? Die vorige aand het almal daar geslaap, hoekom kan ek nou vanaand spesifiek nie daar gaan slaap nie? Toe sê ek, julle hoef nie te 'worry' nie, ek kan vir myself 'defend'. Ek kan myself 'defend' maak nie saak wat gebeur nie. En toe sê hulle net nee en klaar. En dit was so besluit en klaar. En ek het gevoel dit was heeltemal onregverdig gewees."
>
> *"And they .. yes, they discriminated on a certain level and that made me angry, because how can they tell me I can't go and sleep there? The previous night everyone slept there, why then tonight specifically can't I go and sleep there? Then I said, you don't have to worry, I can defend myself. I can defend myself no matter what. And then they just said no and end of story. And so it was decided and done. And I felt it was completely unfair."*

Her experience recalls a quote from an article on the gendered nature of outdoor-based education, which reads, "breaking out of expected, but gendered, roles can be difficult, especially for women" (Delay & Dyment, 2003, p. 29). This statement is made in the light of the ways in which outdoor activities are often viewed as pertaining to a masculine domain.

The oscillation between an acceptance and a resistance of gender roles is a theme which permeates the data. This experience also seems to be different for different participants. Some participants, such as Melissa, and Estelle (a self-proclaimed feminist), at times actively resist being placed into stereotypical female roles. For other participants, ambivalent feelings about the simultaneous benefits and

[16] The kind of danger it would pose was not specified.

disadvantages of gender roles, together with the fact that gendered identities become deeply entrenched, seem to inhibit active resistance.

While it was suggested that the view of wilderness as a masculine domain is dominant, some of the further observations that were offered create alternative way of viewing wilderness. In reflections on all-female wilderness camps, female autonomy, especially when it comes to wilderness-based activities, is described as something positive and desirable. Estelle noted that on mixed camps, during more excursions such as a multi-day hike, the men automatically take – and are expected to take – the lead. However, it was suggested that on female-only camps, when women are granted the opportunity to lead, they gain much from it:

> "En wat ek sien is vroue 'follow', die heeltyd as dit kom by wildernis. Ons gaan 'follow' aanmekaar, as daar mans ook op die kamp is. Maar as ons net vroue op die kamp is, dan kom ons kreatiwiteit en inisiatief 'actually' uit. Soos die laaste kamp het ons gesien het ons ons eie goeters begin doen. Maar as daar mans op hierdie kamp was, dan sou dit nie gebeur het nie."
>
> *"And what I see is women always follow when it comes to wilderness. We go and follow persistently when there are men on the camp as well. But when we are only women on the camp, then our creativity and initiative actually comes out. Like the last camp we saw we started doing our own stuff. But if there were men on this camp, then it would not have happened."*

In this quote, by referring to "we", the participant inserts herself in the activity that is described, noting how she participates in the practice of "following". Likewise, she noted how "we" started doing "our" own stuff. This is an illustration of the dynamic power of discourse in the constitution of experiences, social relations and power structures (Parker, 2002). It also illustrates how women are active participants in the dynamics of gender.

In this section, I have aimed to illustrate how views about gender inform the construction of wilderness as a masculine domain. I have also aimed at identifying some of the beliefs and associated actions that reinforce this idea of wilderness, for example, how on wilderness expeditions, the men typically lead and the women follow. I have noted how, at the same time, participants seemed to resist this idea. An alternative to the view that wilderness is a masculine domain will be explored in more detail in the next section.

5.3.3.2 Constructing wilderness as a place where gender stereotypes can be challenged

General associations that participants had with "wilderness" were all positive, in that they described it as a place where one might experience various individual benefits. The proposed benefits of spending time in the wilderness and of partaking in wilderness-based activities, included: the experience of a sense of inner peace (as you are away from all the "busy-ness" and "distractions"); being able to "just be yourself"; being able to reflect and introspect on one's life; and the experience of "healing" and personal growth. These proposed benefits all seem to stem from the observation that wilderness areas are usually isolated and reflect little or no human impact. They also stem from the observation that in the wilderness, there is the distinct absence of social pressures and expectations to behave in certain ways, which is often the case in an urban environment.

One of the sub-themes that was identified described wilderness as "a place where you can 'be yourself'". This sub-theme was preceded by – and seemed to flow from two other observations regarding wilderness in general. Firstly, during individual interviews and the focus group discussion, participants related "wilderness" to images of pristine nature, unspoilt by human impact. Wilderness was also described as a place of solitude, "cut off from civilization". Participants went on to suggest that as wilderness comprises an isolated natural environment, there is the distinct absence of social pressures and expectations to behave in certain ways. Estelle also remarked that in the wilderness:

> " … 'civilization-structures' val weg soos, volgens ouderdom en ras en al daai goeters val makliker weg."
>
> *" … civilization-structures fall away, according to age and race and all those things fall away more easily."*

In this quote, it is suggested that categories which are usually important markers of identity, such as age, race and gender, can lose the significance (and categorising power) they might otherwise have had. In this way, time spent in the wilderness creates opportunities to feel uninhibited and to just "be". Charmaine contrasted the pressure and agitation that she experiences in daily life to a sense of peace and freedom that she experiences when she is in an isolated natural environment:

> "Baie keer dan voel 'n mens as jy by die huis is is jy onstuimig en so aan, maar as jy in die natuur is kan jy vry wees en jou emosies kan gaan .. en jy kan net jouself wees in die natuur in."
>
> *"Often you feel when you are at home then you are agitated [or "stormy"] and so on, but when you are in nature you can be free and your emotions can go .. and you can just be yourself in nature."*

Ilse contrasted the loss of inhibition that she experiences in the wilderness (when it comes to expressing her emotions) with having to hide her emotions when she is at home, especially when she is feeling sad or upset:

> "Want by die huis baie keer dan verwag hulle jy moet die sterk persoon wees. En baie keer soos ek ook myself, baie keer dan weet my eie familie nie eens of my kinders weet nie hoe ek baie keer huil. En dan moet ek maar gou die gesig was en jy weet. Maar daar kan jy jou uithuil …"
>
> *"... Because at home often they expect you to be the strong person. And often like me also myself, often then my own family does not even or my children do not even know how often I cry. And then I have to just quickly wash the face and you know. But there you can cry it all out"*

What is suggested in this quote is that there is a certain image of whom she is, that she tries to – or feels pressurised to uphold when she is at home. This image depicts her as someone who is "strong" and who does not cry easily. The experience of not having to uphold this image, or just "being", is described as liberating and as providing relief. A metaphor relating to this theme which participants used often, is that of "masks we wear", wilderness being a place where we can "take off those masks". Cindy used this metaphor while referring to the pressure that she experiences in everyday life of having to fulfil certain roles and having to live up to certain expectations:

> "Mense in die .. wat in die gewone samelewing is [daar] is so baie druk op jou. Mense verwag so baie van jou en somtyds kan jy nie wees wat hulle wil hê jy moet wees nie en dan gee jy voor dat jy daai persoon is. Maar in die natuur kan jy jouself wees en jy kan daai masker afhaal, want jy's alleen en jy kan jouself vind. Jy kan vir jouself sê, dit en dit is wat ek is. En dit is wie ek is."
>
> *"People in the .. that in regular society [there] is so much pressure on you. People expect so much of you and sometimes you can't be what they want you to be and then you pretend to be that person. But in nature you can be yourself and you can take off that mask, because you're alone and you can find yourself. You can tell yourself, this and this is what I am. And this is who I am."*

"Masks" here refer to the ways in which we adapt our behaviour, hiding our true feelings or opinions in order to conform to social expectations regarding appropriate behaviour. This is usually done to escape possible judgement, criticism or marginalisation. In this previous quote, Cindy suggests how being in a

space where there are no expectations as to how one should be creates an opportunity for exploring different ways of being. She also specifically refers to the opportunity to "find yourself", in contrast to everyday situations in which you take on various roles which hide a true self. "Masks" which come off in the wilderness – there being an absence of social expectations – were also described as representative of gendered roles and expectations.

In line with the proposed masculine attributes needed to participate in wilderness activities (as listed in the previous section), Estelle noted that wilderness–based excursions give women the opportunity to step out of stereotypical female forms of behaviour. She also equated female gender roles with creating or perpetuating a sense of not being as competent as men ("inadequacy"):

> "Ek dink vroue kom baie meer uit hulle gewone geslagsrolle van 'inadequacy' en soos, dat hulle nie goeters kan .. kom uit, en jy moet baie meer 'independent' wees as jy in 'nature' is. En dit is 'qualities' wat meer geassosieer word met mansrolle … van die vroue sal van hulle geslagsrolle 'drop' en hulle word 'allow' om van dit te drop hulle kan meer, 'active' wees en al daai goeters."
>
> *"I think women come out of their usual gender roles of inadequacy more and like, that (there are things) they cannot .. comes out, and you have to be much more independent when you're in nature. And those are qualities that are associated more with male roles … some of the women will drop some of their gender roles and they are allowed to drop some of it they can be more, active and all of those things."*

Together with describing wilderness as a place where you can "be yourself", participants noted that because social structures and expectations fall away in the wilderness, there is less pressure to go along with stereotypical gender roles. It was also suggested that certain man-made structures which are absent in the wilderness, remind us of – and reinforce gendered expectations, such a kitchen, being a "woman's place". In this way, wilderness, being an "unknown" (or less familiar) environment, creates space for men and women to explore different, unconventional ways of being. One participant went on to suggest that if one really wanted to transgress gender roles, wilderness camps should ideally take place in a setting where there are no man-made facilities in sight to remind people of societal structures and expectations[17].

In the same way that women can take on "masculine" forms of behaviour, it was proposed that in the wilderness men also have the opportunity to explore so-called feminine ways of being, such as showing

[17] Most of the campsites that are used, even though they are fairly remote, contain some kind of man-made structure, such as barracks or dormitories.

and sharing their emotions. Furthermore, being in the wilderness allows for men and women to discover unexpected sides of each other, as the "masks" start coming off. For example, Ilse described discovering that "hulle (mans) sit ook met goed" (*"they [men] also sit with things"*), and Cindy made a similar observation:

> "En ek het selfs gesien selfs met die mentor kamp nou ... Die vrouens het gepraat en die mans het gevoel hulle het die vrymoedigheid om te kan praat. En wat vir my baie uitgestaan het van hierdie mans en vroue kampe is dat jy kan eintlik baie leer deur wat die mans deurgaan en miskien gaan jy dieselfde goed deur met in jou lewe en dan sien jy maar net aan die anderkant hoe die mans ook dink en hoe hulle voel.""""
>
> *"I even saw with the mentor camp now ... The women spoke and the men felt they could feel at liberty to speak. And what stood out for me about these men and women camps was that you could actually learn through what the men go through and maybe you go through the same things and then you just see on the other side how the men also think and how they feel."*

When social expectations to conform to gender roles start falling away, opportunities are consequently created for men and women to start exploring different ways if being. This view is also expressed in participants' reflection on all-female camps where participants noted that for women, exploring so-called masculine ways can be empowering. It can help them shed learnt forms of behaviour which construct them as passive, which create in them feelings of dependency and inferiority, and which deprive them of opportunities that men seem to enjoy socially. In turn, it was suggested that time in the wilderness provides opportunity for men to explore so-called feminine ways of being, such as showing and sharing their emotions.

5.4 Summary of the findings

Participants have ambivalent views on gender roles, finding that they have both benefits and negative consequences. The negative consequences are that it creates in women a sense of dependence and feelings of inferiority, and constructs them as passive. Furthermore, by constructing women as passive, unequal social position in which men enjoy more power and status, are created and perpetuated. However, gender seems to play a pivotal and powerful role in the construction of identity, and thus seems to lie deeply embedded within the individual. This can be seen in ways in which participants indentify with typically feminine forms of behaviour. Furthermore, gender roles carry certain benefits for participants. It is described as familiar and thus brings with it a sense of security and belonging. The ambivalent feelings

that participants have about gender and gender roles are reflected in the ways in which a discourse of male privilege is both resisted and reinforced.

This ambivalence is furthermore reflected in the implementation and facilitation of wilderness camps, and in the ways in which women conceptualise wilderness. One the one hand, wilderness is seen as a place where pressure to conform to gender roles is significantly less than in an everyday urban environment. In this way, time spent in the wilderness is constructed as something positive, beneficial, "healing" and highly desirable. This view of wilderness is also reflected in the way the female facilitators experience all-female wilderness camps - as something positive and empowering. This view of wilderness opens up opportunities for utilising wilderness as a place where gender stereotyping might be challenged.

Wilderness is also constructed as masculine domain. In this view, wilderness becomes a place where gender stereotypes are perpetuated. This also reflected in the ways in which separate camps for adolescent boys and girls are structured. This view of wilderness, as well as the accompanying practices on wilderness camps which reinforce this view, closes down possibilities for utilizing wilderness experiences as a means of challenging gender stereotyping. One could say that the latter view wilderness is a counter-discourse to the former, which depict wilderness experiences as liberating.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the ways in which beliefs and assumptions about gender influence the views that female facilitators of a wilderness programme have of "wilderness". In using a discourse analytic approach, this also entailed an exploration of gender discourses - shaped by the beliefs that participants have about gender -, and discursive constructions of "wilderness" - shaped by the ways in which participants view wilderness.

Participants had ambivalent feelings about gender, reflected in their simultaneous support and resistance of a discourse of male privilege. This ambivalence is further reflected in the role that gender plays in the implementation of wilderness camps, and the conflicting ways in which wilderness is discursively constructed. There are two main ways in which wilderness is constructed. Firstly, wilderness is constructed as a masculine domain. In other words, the skills or qualities needed to participate in wilderness-based activities are associated with typical masculine characteristics. This is a view that permeates the history of the design and the implementation of wilderness-based programmes. This view of wilderness potentially hinders women from enjoying the full benefits that such programmes might offer them. Additionally, it could prevent men from exploring alternative ways of being and interacting, to the ones dictated by society.

In the second view of wilderness, it is constructed it as a place which provides opportunities for gender stereotypes to be challenged. This view also resonates with literature on the topic, which suggests that wilderness experiences create opportunities for gender stereotypes to be challenged.

This study adopted a social constructionist, feminist perspective. This perspective emphasises the material bases of power (for example, social, economic and cultural arrangements) "and the need for change at this level of discourse" (Gavey, 1999, p. 54). Varying discourses do not influence language, thought and action equally. Some have a privileged and dominant influence, and are usually shaped through social interaction and through particular language communities. Furthermore, discourses vary in terms of the power that they offer individuals. A discourse of male privilege legitimates female subordination. As mentioned before, a discourse which entails the view that masculine traits are needed to participate in wilderness-based activities limit women from enjoying certain benefits that participation in such activities could offer them. This view of wilderness closes down the opportunities that wilderness experiences might provide to challenge gender stereotypes. It also potentially defeats important objectives in the girls' programme, namely to empower them and to promote positive development. The way in which gender

influences the implementation of wilderness camps reflects the power of gender as a social institution whereby individuals are held to strongly gendered norms and expectations (Lorber, 2000). The way in which gender roles and norms seem to form a fundamental component of individual identity contributes to a social structure which includes a "built-in mechanism of social control" (West & Zimmerman, 1991, p. 33). Furthermore, "in appreciating the institutional forces that maintain distinctions between women and men, we must not lose sight of the interactional validation of those distinctions that confers upon them their sense of 'naturalness' and 'rightness'" (West & Zimmerman, 1991).

In this study it was found that participants also draw on wider, societal discourses regarding gender. This is due to the fact that discourses never stand in isolation, by their nature they are interrelated. However, individuals are not passive and have a "choice" when positioning themselves in relation to various discourses (Gavey, 1999). They can resist, reject or challenge discourses, to a greater or lesser extent (Gavey, 1999). This was evident in the ways in which participants challenged the notion of wilderness as being a masculine domain, and the ways in which at least two participant challenged traditional notions of femininity. Resisting dominant discourses, however, is not always a simple matter of rational choice. What stood out in the narrating of participants' experiences with gender and wilderness was much ambivalence and contradiction. This could be interpreted as evidence of the multi-voicedness of discourse, which often offers competing and potentially contradicting ways of giving meaning to the world. Weedon offers some insight into the multi-voicedness of discourse, by suggesting that

> "... consciousness, as fragmented and contradictory, is the product of a discursive battle for the subjectivity of the individual. For example, some women have chosen feminism as a system of meaning that is preferable for understanding their lives in this society at this time. Yet despite this choice some aspects of a feminist woman's subjectivity may still be gendered in traditionally feminine ways, and she may retain desires and behaviours incompatible with the goals of feminism". (as cited in Gavey, 1999, p. 54)

While participants both supported and resisted discourses which challenge (or perpetuate) gender stereotypes, this study suggests that there is a strong tendency to adhere to social and cultural notions of gender roles and norms. Shefer et al (2008) note that views on gender are often rooted in shared ideology , which also seems to be the case here. It is important to develop and understanding of gender from the perspectives of different groups of people in order to for gender-based interventions to be at all successful. On the level of discourse there seems to be a need to redefine contemporary, stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity, as these often serve to perpetuate unequal gender relations. In the words of one of the participants, Estelle:

"I thought about that we have to create our own stories again. And that we have to create your own story about what it is to be a woman (or a man!)".

6.2 Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

During the course of the project I became aware of the extent to which the discussion participants were having implied and involved male facilitators. In line with Shefer et al. (2008), what also came up during the interviews and the focus group discussion was how both men and women play important roles in the creation and perpetuation of gender stereotypes and expectations. What became clear was that this study lacks a (much needed) male perspective which could have offered valuable insights.

The discourses that were identified seem coherent and consistent, and seem to be compatible with established discourses regarding gender and wilderness. However, it is uncertain to what extent the discourses were influenced by the research situation. Now that they have been identified, these discourses and the ways in which they might influence the implementation of wilderness programmes need to be investigated further. In the South African context, there is very little literature on local wilderness programmes, and practically none on the gendered nature of these programmes.

A further limitation of this study is the fact that it focused on the experiences of facilitators, while indirectly, the findings pertain to adolescent participants on the wilderness programmes. A study which focuses more directly on the experiences of adolescent participants might be considered for future research. What could also be useful is a longitudinal design which explores or measures the ways in which wilderness experiences might challenge or reinforce gendered attitudes.

One of the strengths of the design of this study is its ecological validity. Participant observation entailed doing research in a real-life setting and as a result, there is no need to extrapolate from an artificial setting (such as a laboratory) to a real context. However, the fact that this was a very context-specific study confines its relevance. The findings pertain to a specific organisation and, as such, would be difficult to generalise to a wider population. A quantitative approach with a bigger sample might have enabled this. Alternately, a comparative study which explores the gender nature of a range of different wilderness programmes might have been used. Nevertheless, even though this study focuses on a specific case, the findings might be used to make inferences about the nature of gendered discourses, and the difficulty in negotiating different subject positions.

6.3 Recommendations to Usiko

This study aimed at highlighting the ways in which gender influences views on wilderness and the implementation of Usiko's wilderness camps. At present, the programme objectives for boys and girls

programmes are the same. However, in this study, views were expressed which suggest that the needs for adolescent girls and boys might be different. This is a topic that could be investigated further. It could shed some light on whether it might be beneficial to structure boys and girls camps differently. There might also different psychological, social or physical processes that occur for males or females on the programmes. Similarly, the programme outcomes for males and females might differ. In the light of studies on gender differences, facilitators can make appropriate adjustments to the programmes. At present, there is no data on this.

What became apparent during this study is a lack of reflection on the pivotal role that gender seems to play in the implementation of the wilderness camps. Facilitators play an important role not only in guiding Usiko's programmes to meet their objectives, but also in being role-models for the adolescent participants on the programmes. As such, it is important that they reflect on their own beliefs, assumptions and behaviours about gender, and on how these might carry over to the participants.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

UNIVERSITEIT•STELLENBOSCH•UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Exploring gendered discourse in the talk of female facilitators of a wilderness programme

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Ms. Lise Anthonissen (BA Hons psychology), from the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will be contributed to a thesis for a master's degree in research psychology. You were selected as a possible participant in this study on the base of your involvement as a female facilitator and mentor in Usiko's programme for adolescent girls.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the connotations that women have with wilderness, and to better understand how women experience themselves in the outdoors. Furthermore, this study aims to gain insight into how experiences in nature might challenge or change the perceptions that women have of themselves and of the outdoors.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- To take part in a hour-long, individual interview, in which you will be required to reflect on topics and answer certain questions which are of relevance to this particular study.

- Together with some of the other female mentors involved at Usiko, to take part in a focus group discussion (approximately 1.5 hrs), in which the topics will again be ones that are relevant to this particular study.

The individual interview will take place either at the Usiko office at the Sustainability institute outside of Stellenbosch, at Weber Gedenk primary school in Jamestown or at The Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Due to the nature of the questions that will be asked - they are not too personal and deal with a topic that most of the participants are likely to have positive associations with - there are no foreseeable inconveniences or risks to participation in this study. In the unlikely event of a participant experiencing discomfort to such an extent that she requires the services of a mental health practitioner, she will be referred to Stellenbosch University's counselling unit.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The participant will benefit from this research by learning more about the potential outcomes of wilderness experiences which are empowering for women. This will indirectly help the participant to gain a better understanding of her own role as a wilderness programme facilitator, and how she might be able to help improve the effectiveness of the programme.

In terms of benefiting society, this study will contribute to and broaden the existing, albeit sparse, literature on the relationship between wilderness programmes and empowering women. As no such study has been done within the South African context, the results will add South African women's voices to research on the outcomes of participating in wilderness programmes. Together with contributing to the fields psychology and feminist studies, this study could also indicate specific aspects that need to be studied in future.

Additionally, knowledge gained through this study could be used as a resource in guiding the design of wilderness programmes for women and girls. For example, possible positive outcomes might be used in

sculpting Usiko's already-existing programme for girls, in order meet the specific needs of the program more effectively. Alternately, it could be used for making recommendations for future programs.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Due to a lack of funding, participants in this study will receive no payment. However, in order to have the participant feel as comfortable as possible, a beverage will be provided during the interview, and refreshments will be provided during the focus group discussion.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of code names. The data will be stored in on a password-protected pc, and all paper records will be kept in a lockable filing cabinet to which only the researcher and her supervisor will have access. The interview and focus group material will only be used for this project, and will be destroyed at the end of the project. Code names will be maintained when the thesis gets published.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Ms. Lise Anthonissen (Researcher)

Room: 217 (Department of Psychology)

Tel: 072 188 6444

E-mail: 14082187@sun.ac.za

Ms. S. van Wyk (Co-supervisor)

Room: 218

Tel: (021) 808 3452

Prof A. Naidoo (Co-supervisor)

Room: 204

Tel: (021) 808 3441

All of who can also be contacted at:

Department of Psychology

Private Bag XI

Matieland

7602

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by Me. Lise Anthonissen in (please circle) Afrikaans/English and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Subject/Participant

_____

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_____ _____

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative **Date**

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ . She was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in Afrikaans/English and no translator was used.

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator **Date**

APPENDIX B: BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Biographical Questionnaire

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">1.1 Surname:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Name:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1.2 Date of birth:</td><td>Age:</td><td colspan="2">1.3 Title:</td><td>Gender:</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.4 Race:</td><td>White</td><td colspan="2">Black</td><td>Coloured</td><td>Indian</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">1.5 Nationality:</td><td colspan="3">1.6 Home Language:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">1.7 Marital status:</td><td colspan="3">1.8 Dependents: yes / no

If yes, how many?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">1.9 Level of education: (Highest qualification achieved)</td></tr>
</table>

1.10 Occupation:
1.11 Extramural activities:
1.12 Lenght and nature of involvement at Usiko:

2. CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Addresses**

2.1.1 Correspondence address: Postal code:		
2.1.2 Current physical address: Postal code:		
2.1.3 E-mail address:	2.1.4 Telephone numbers:	
2.1.5 Landline:	2.1.6 Fax:	2.1.7 Cell phone:

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Exploring gendered discourse in the talk of female facilitators of a wilderness programme

Interview Guide

As an introduction, I will enquire about the participants' involvement at Usiko, for example, what made her decide to join and what are some of the experiences that stand out for her. While keeping the research question in mind, the following questions will then be used as probes as the interview develops, in order to encourage a more in-depth discussion.

Personal wilderness experiences:

- Apart from Usiko, what are some of your own associations with the word "wilderness"?
- What does the word symbolise for you?
- Which kind of activities would you associate with the wilderness?
- What own experiences do you associate with wilderness?
- What memories does the word bring up?

Usiko-related wilderness experiences

- How many of Usiko's camps have you been on?
- Which camp-experiences stand out and why?
- How does Usiko utilize wilderness?
- According to yourself, what is the idea behind using wilderness in Usiko camps? What role does the wilderness play?
- If you can remember, what were your ideas of wilderness before you joined Usiko?
- If you can remember – how might the ideas that you previously had of wilderness have been changed, through working with Usiko?

Gender and wilderness experiences

- How many camps that you have been on were female-only? (If you have been on such a camp; with and apart from Usiko)
- Did you notice any significant differences between camps that were for women only, and ones that were mixed?
- On a camp, are there tasks which are specifically assigned to men and some which are assigned to women?

- Why do you think this is so? (regarding previous question)
- If tasks are not *specifically* assigned to men or women, are there ones which are generally assumed to be for men or women? (For example, that either men or women do, by default)
- Which tasks are shared by men and women?
- According to your own view, what part does being in nature play on a camp?
- What possible benefits are there, do you think, to spending time in nature?
- What part does participating in outdoor activities play on a camp?
- And how do you, yourself, feel about outdoor activities?
- What skills, do you think, are needed to participate in outdoor activities?
- What possible benefits are there to participating in outdoor activities?
- Often there is the perception that female physical abilities are "not as highly valued as those of their male counterparts". What do you make of this statement?
- On a camp, how are men treated as opposed to women? Any personal experiences regarding this topic?
- Why do you think this is so and how do you feel about it? (Regarding previous question)
- What meaning do the camps that you have been on thus far hold for you? What have you been able to take from your camp experiences?

<u>More general questions</u> (towards the end of the interview)

- How do you think time in the wilderness differs from time at home (routines of daily life, work, etc) ?
- Do you think there are ways in which women, specifically, can benefit from spending time in the wilderness? If so, how?
- What does being a woman mean for you?
- Being a woman, what do you feel is expected of you

  - at home or within your family?
  - at work?
  - socially?

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE (21 May 2010)

- Welcoming and introduction
- Check in
- Introduction to themes that came up during the individual interviews
- Recap of descriptions of wilderness

1.) Wilderness is often seen as a manly domain, in terms of the characteristics needed to participate in outdoor activities. What do you think about this statement?

2.) Please discuss the following statement: "Female facilitators serve as role models to the girls that partake in the programmes. Any opinions or beliefs that we might have regarding men and women might be carried over to them."

4.) The idea for this study developed from a past discussion that I had with Tony Naidoo (member of the Usiko Trust). He sensed that initially, the camps for boys and girls were designed and implemented differently. Please discuss.

5.) During the individual interviews there were mixed opinions regarding task allocation on a wilderness camp. Some felt that it was "equal", others felt that the men automatically take the lead. Please discuss.

6.) Male facilitators seem to partake more in the active or physically demanding tasks on a camp. An opinion that was proposed was that this is because the women "are at times a bit lazy". It could also allude to a type of learnt passivity. Please discuss.

7.) Why do the men pick the solo-spots?

8.) Estelle – you mentioned that in the wilderness, gender differences become less prominent. Could you elaborate on this? Would anyone else like to comment on this?

9.) Is there anything else that anyone would like to add?

APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPTION NOTATION

Transcription notation

. A noticeable pause or stopping fall in tone

, A pause shorter than .5 second

.. A pause between .5 and 1 second

... Indication that some words or utterances were left out

() Numbers in brackets indicate timed pauses

() Words in brackets contain additional, descriptive information

? Indication of a rising tone, usually indicating a question

! Indication of animated tone

hhh Audible aspiration or inhalation

Underlined words indicate emphasis

Word in italics were translated from Afrikaans to English

Table 1

Usiko Participants Demographic Details

Code name	Age	Race	Language	Educational status	Relationship status	No. of children	Job status
Alicia	24	Coloured	E	University degree	Single	0	Employed ft
Melissa	32	Coloured	A	Matric	Single	0	Employed ft
Estelle	26	White	A	University Degree	Single	0	Employed ft
Ilse	56	Coloured	A	Diploma	Married	3	Employed ft
Charmaine	39	Coloured	A	Matric	Married	3	Unemployed
Cindy	36	Coloured	A	Matric	Married	2	Employed ft

Key

A: Afrikaans

E: English

ft: full-time

Table 2

Themes and Sub-themes on Gender and Wilderness

General associations with "wilderness"	General beliefs and assumptions about gender	Wilderness and gender
Images of pristine nature	Women as showing and sharing their emotions more openly than men	Views regarding mixed wilderness camps
A place of solitude	Women as "carers" and men as "protectors"	Views regarding all-female wilderness camps
A place where you can "be yourself"	Women as being responsible for domestic duties	Wilderness-based activities as benefiting women specifically
Opportunities for reflection and introspection	Women as conflict-resolvers	Wilderness as a "masculine domain"
Opportunities for experiencing personal growth	Women as under pressure to conform to certain beauty ideals	Wilderness as a place in which gender stereotypes can be challenged
A place which inspires creativity	Men as being driven by sexual needs	Structural differences between all-male and all-female camps
A place which stimulates spiritual awareness	Men and women as "different species"	
The "unknown"	In the past women were discriminated against but this has changed	
	Men and women as equally competent	
	Men as occupying more powerful social positions	
	The negative effects of gender stereotyping	